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**An exploration of executive coaching as an  
experiential learning process within the context of the  
Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.**

A project submitted to Middlesex University in partial  
fulfilment of the requirements for the of the degree  
Doctor of Professional Studies (Executive Coaching)

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# Synopsis

This research project involved a phenomenological exploration of executive coaching as an experiential learning process within the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. This model proposes that executive coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development with the aim of improving individual and organizational performance. It is not therapy. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher's Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber's Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb's Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Harri-Augstein and Thomas's concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool.

An adapted version of the Transcendental Phenomenological Methodology of Moustakas was chosen to explore and discover the meaning and essence of the learning experience while being coached within the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It was hypothesised that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model facilitated both the prehension and transformational dimensions of Experiential Learning in individuals. The co-researchers understood and owned some significant behavioural dynamics inside of themselves, as well as between themselves and other significant colleagues. This underlines the possibilities of coaching as a staff development intervention to facilitate self-authorisation by working through one's own unconscious and dynamic behavioural issues. It was hypothesised that coaching presented from this model empowers individual employees to work towards their own cognitive insight, the experience of emotional meaningfulness and taking of responsibility for their own growth and career development.

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# **Chapter 1**

## **Introduction**

### **1.1 Aim of the Research Project**

In the absence of an integrated coaching theory, the aim of this project was to further develop and write up, apply, explore and refine the embryonic Integrated Experiential Coaching Model as it forms the Meta theory and philosophy underpinning my coaching practice and the way I approach coaching.

### **1.2 Objectives of the Research Project**

The first objective was to reflect on my professional experience to see how my working experience contributed to my development as a coach. More importantly, how my concrete experience contributed experiential knowledge to the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.

The second objective was to reflect on how my pre understanding helped me to engage the literature in order too expand my theoretical knowledge on the subject.

The third objective covered the abstract conceptualization part of the learning process. It involved writing up the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model (developing the theory) and adapting it even further to be more relevant within the context in which it would be applied. This part of the process included the design and planning of the research project. Here the objective was to undertake a phenomenological exploration of the individual's subjective learning experience while being coached within the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It was about exploring and discovering rather than measuring. Exploring and discovering the meaning and essence of the learning experience while being coached. The research was about obtaining descriptions of experience through first-person accounts through the use of reflective essays. It was about exploring people's inner world's or dimensions. As a

result it was qualitative in nature and hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing.

The next objective was to research and select a research methodology that would fulfil these research requirements.

The fifth objective involved the active experimentation part of the learning process. This involved applying the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model framework within a large organization, undertaking the research, doing the analysis, writing up the research findings and generating a hypothesis for further research.

The final objective would be to reflect on the research findings in order to compare the findings to other research findings, make some recommendations for future research and to continuously adapt the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model to make it more effective in practice.

### **1.3 Personal and professional background**

I started my working career as a minister of religion after completing my Theological studies in 1984. During my probation year I decided to leave the ministry and enter into the world of business. My interest in business arose through my interaction with Executives during that probation year. I had the fortunate privilege of working with executives in a number of settings. The interactions from which I learnt the most however, was when I ministered to executives dying of cancer or having had double or triple heart bypass operations. It gave me a perspective on life that has never left me. It also developed a strong empathy within me for these giants of industry. Most people only see executive's successful sides; I got to know them when they were at their most vulnerable. Despite their outward success and enormous wealth, in the end it actually meant nothing. The awareness that life is more important than our work has never left me.

On completing my National Service I worked in the Bank for three months and then joined the Investments Division of Old Mutual Plc. Initially I provided administration support to the portfolio managers and later I worked in marketing. Here my function

was to analyse unit trust performance and write all the marketing material. The five years in investments taught me a great deal about the financial markets and the complexities involved in these markets. I gained a good working knowledge of economics and the impact it has on various industries and the financial markets. It taught me to look at business in a more holistic way. I gained a working knowledge of macro and microeconomics. Macro in the sense that I had to write reports explaining the investment returns achieved, given the existing macro economic climate. Micro in the sense that I had to analyse the funds performance based on stock selection and the portfolio manager's ability to time the market correctly. During this time, my ability to do quantitative research and my analytical skills grew exponentially. Given this strong research and analytical experience I decided to do my MBA Thesis on "The viability of index funds for the Republic of South Africa."

In 1992 having just completed my MBA I moved to Norwich Life. The late 90's was a very interesting time in South Africa. The ANC had been unbanned, the first democratic elections in the history of the country had just taken place. No doubt about it, the country was a political miracle. The same could not be said of the business environment. Prior to the elections many industries had grown and survived in a protected environment. This was especially true in the case of the financial services industry. The most protected of all were the Life Assurance companies. They had grown and thrived in an environment where there were exchange controls, high inflation and effectively no competition. Given the high rates of inflation, banks could not compete. Furthermore, these Life Companies effectively controlled the unit trust industry.

The net effect was that there were too many life companies in the market. Given that they effectively had no competition, they were running very expensive operations. The overarching strategy for the industry was new business at all costs. Quality service did not exist. These institutions were at the mercy of the intermediaries. The intermediary was king not the client.

Given the changes that were occurring in the country, there was a realisation at Norwich that the company had to be transformed or it would not survive. It was in this environment that Roger Le Crerar the then General Manager of Administration

(and the best mentor I have ever had) invited me to come and work for him. At the time, Peter Senge's Learning Organisations and Hammer's Business Process Re-engineering were the topics of discussion in the boardrooms in South Africa.

Roger knew that Norwich Life was running an expensive operation, and he wanted to re-engineer the administration processes. I had introduced him to a systems dynamic computer simulation package called iThink and suggested that we use the package to simulate our business processes before we make any changes to the business. During this time, the consulting norm was to make a tremendous amount of assumptions. Draw up the new processes on brown paper, get people to agree to the new processes and implement. The rest is history; we all know that many of those exercises ended in disaster.

Roger and I opted to first build the processes in a computer simulation environment and do all our what-if analysis in that environment. I was given responsibility for this project, to do the analysis, involve everybody and build the model. This modelling project took me three months to complete. For the first time in the company's history there was an actual understanding as to how complex the new business process within a life company was.

Until we had built this model, the assumption was that if we implemented an electronic workflow system we could get rid of all our regional underwriters and save the company a great deal of money. What we learnt was that our assumptions were incorrect and that we would have a huge bottleneck in the process if we only kept our head office underwriters. It was impossible for them to cope with the new workload. As a result, a number of regional underwriters were relocated to head office. Once they were in place we started to implement the re-engineered process.

As a result of the success of the project, Roger placed me in charge of the workflow project. Strategically this was a critical project, in that workflow could improve our cost ratios substantially. There were only two life companies in South Africa at the time that had decided to implement workflow on a national basis. All the remaining companies had opted to implement workflow in a centralised head office environment. Given the fact that the postal service in South Africa was very ineffective and

unreliable workflow was seen as being critical to improving customer service. Needless to say a technology project of this magnitude would be very complex. In my case it was even worse, in that I had no technological (IT) experience at all. This was compounded by the fact that it was the first time that a businessperson would manage such a large IT project. The first obstacle that I had to overcome was that as a non-IT professional I had no credibility with the technical staff. I eventually did gain their credibility through my leadership, strategic, analytical and modelling abilities.

The first thing I did was to attend a project management course. The second thing I did was to model the complexity of the project in iThink. Once again I had to work with all levels and functions within the organisation. This was one of the steepest learning curves in my life. The thing about workflow is that it cuts across the entire business. This was really the point in my life where I started to think in terms of processes instead of functions. Workflow breaks down all functional boundaries. The other thing about workflow is that it is a very complex environment, in that; it interacts with every single computer system that exists within the company. This is where my analytical and synthesising abilities grew in leaps and bounds. I had to analyse which systems were involved, how they worked and the interdependencies amongst each one of them. Finally, all this had to be synthesised into a workable model. It was during this process that I learnt to apply systems thinking to solve a practical business problem.

When I had completed the model we realized that our current network was not going to cope with the demands that the workflow system would place on it. We did a number of tests and then realized that we had to replace our entire network. A new network was implemented.

My team then set about building the workflow system. Within 18 months the first phase of the workflow project was implemented. Given our success with the workflow project and computer simulation modelling, I was invited on two occasions to present papers to the workflow interest group of the computer society of South Africa. This was my first experience of managing a large complex project that was of strategic importance to the company.



I was then given the responsibility for developing an Internet strategy for the company, which my team and I did. We were the first life company in South Africa to give our clients and brokers access to their information via the Internet. In fact when Bill Gates visited South Africa he used the Norwich Web site as an example of what was possible in the Microsoft environment.

By late 1996 Norwich Life had developed some very sophisticated IT systems and infrastructure. We had become very proficient in the client server environment. The problem, and the frustration, was that we had built sophisticated systems but we were finding it difficult to get people to use the systems optimally. We had changed the infrastructure and excelled, but we had totally ignored the change management side of the project. The technical side was excellent but the social cultural change was non-existent. This is where I learnt that technology does not provide a company with a strategic competitive advantage. Technology is only an enabler. The strategic advantage of a company is its people. It is the ability of the people to learn faster than their competitors.

In September 1996 Mike Brewis the Managing Director of Norwich Life approached me and invited me to become the company strategist reporting directly to him. This was most probably one of the most difficult decisions I ever had to make. Given my track record, and the expertise I had developed, I was becoming very marketable in the IT industry. Furthermore, I enjoyed working in the IT environment and leading and implementing large projects that cut across the entire organisation. Eventually Roger Le Crerar convinced me to take the job on the grounds that it was a good platform from which to start influencing cultural change within the organisation. In October 1996, at the age of 33, I was appointed company strategist and secretary to the Executive Committee of Norwich Life. It was actually scarring to realise then just how much influence I had at such a young age. Fortunately for me I had an excellent mentor in Roger who mentored me throughout the entire processes.

By early 1997 the Executive realised that we did not have the skills or knowledge to manage large-scale change interventions. As a result RGA Consulting was contracted to help us transform the culture of the company. Cultural surveys had revealed a very autocratic and disempowered culture. Not surprising, given that the Norwich Group

CEO was a total autocrat. The Executive felt that if the company was to survive in the new environment they had to start empowering the people.

RGA was the first company we found that had a process, which involved the whole company in strategy formulation and implementation. The process was basically a combination of Future Search Methodologies and Participative Re-design workshops and was known as the “Transformation Process.” The former was a process developed by Emery and Trist at the Tavistock Institute in the 60’s. In the 80’s it was developed further and popularised by Marvin Weisborg. Bob Rhem designed the latter.

As company strategist I worked very closely with RGA from the beginning. However, the ownership of the project rested with the MD. The process effectively started with the MD doing a personal Future Search and setting the direction for the company. An Executive Future Search would follow where the strategy was co-created. This was followed by a Search that involved the entire management team who further co-created the strategy. At the same time a process was started in which people within the organisation elected representatives who would attend a National Future Search Conference. In July 1997 the National conference took place. This was the first conference of its type in South Africa. Eighty people from every level within the organisation were present to co-create the company’s strategy.

Thereafter, each executive would cascade the process through his or her entire division. These workshops would then be followed up with re-design workshops where self managed teams were introduced. By this time, it became apparent that the process was more complex than anybody had anticipated.

I began to realise that many of the executives and senior management were being overwhelmed by the complexity involved with such a large-scale change initiative. I found myself spending more and more of my time coaching the executives on a one-on-one basis. It was then that I started to read the work of Ken Wilber. In Wilber I found an author that provided me with a more holistic framework for my thinking. It had slowly dawned on me that systems’ thinking was not as holistic as I originally thought. He introduced me to the concept of levels of consciousness and that there is a worldview associated with each level. Subsequent to that, I stumbled upon the work

of Elliot Jacques on Stratified Systems Theory. Jacques work complemented Wilber's very well. Finally I had found in these two individuals a theoretical framework that fitted my experience. For the first time I started to understand why the complexity was overwhelming many of the executives and management. They were simply out of their depth. They did not have the cognitive power too deal with such complexity.

I was therefore, not very surprised when the MD asked me to manage the "Alignment Process" in August 1997. Up until then, he had managed the processes. In order to get the process back on track RGA offered to train me as an internal consultant, something they had never done before. This was by far the biggest and most complex project I had to manage to date. At least they gave me one other person to help me with the project. It involved working with everybody in the organisation from the Executive Team to the lowest of clerks. We worked with every division and department in the organisation. In fact we had a better idea of what was going on within the organisation than anybody else. In 10 months we facilitated 26 of these workshops. One of those workshops was an External Stakeholders conference where we invited our top brokers and clients to help us co-create our strategy even further. Involving brokers and clients in strategy formulation was unheard of in the industry at the time. The executives were extremely nervous of the idea and once again I had to coach them through the entire processes.

Future searches methodologies are action orientated and rely on experiential learning. As a result of that, I became a big disciple of experiential learning. (Although, I never read Kolb's book I worked with what I had learnt from RGA.) The more I facilitated these workshops the more I learnt about experiential learning experientially. To this day I am impressed by how simple and hard it is, by its simplicity and its complexity. I also became more and more impressed with Norton and Kaplan's Balanced Scorecard. It is a tool, and a discipline, that takes strategy from formulation to implementation, and enables one to better manage some of the complexities involved with large-scale change interventions. Another big learning curve for me during this time was the power of dialogue and narrative. As people dialogued and told their stories we were able to extract some phenomenal learning's. Soon I was using dialogue and experiential learning as the basis for all these searches, especially during

the history sessions. I developed Table 1.1 (based on the work of Danar Zohar) for facilitation and it has served me well ever since.

<b>Dialogue</b>	<b>Debate</b>
Finding out	Knowing
Questions	Answers
Equal	Winning/Losing
Respect/Reverence	Proving a Point
New Possibilities	Defending a position
Inquiring into Assumptions	Justifying/Defending Assumptions
Learning through inquiry and disclosure	Persuading, Selling & Telling
Creating shared meaning amongst many	Choosing one meaning among many
Seeing connections and relationships	Seeing distinctions and differences
Seeing the whole that encompasses the parts	Breaking problems into parts

Table 1.1. Dialogue versus Debate

Source: Adapted for Zohar (1997)

The other big learning curve at the time was that many of the conflicts that we thought were interpersonal were not. To our surprise we found that the people actually could get on with each other outside the work environment. At work all hell broke loose. As we explored this, through dialogue and action learning, we soon discovered that the conflicts resulted from the way we design organisations. Conflict is designed into the system. Because we design organisations in terms of functions, instead of processes, the system produces certain behaviours. We keep thinking it's the person, so we get rid of that person and replace them with someone else. Sooner or later the new person reacts within a similar manner. The system creates its own behaviours. Here I found the work of Barry Oshry on seeing and leading systems invaluable. In the end the system is more powerful than the individual. This was the hardest lesson of all. Despite all we had achieved, Norwich became the target of a hostile takeover in February 1998. On 30 June 1998 I did a presentation to the Fedsure Executive on

the process and methodology that we would use to merge the two companies. Following that, I spent two days with Morris Bernstein (MD Fedsure Life Group) and Mike Brewis (MD Fedsure Life) to set the high-level strategy and parameters for the rest of the process.

In August 1998 all the previous executives and senior management of Fedsure Life and Norwich Life were assembled in Cape Town, to develop a strategy, and appropriate structure for the new company. Interestingly as we started this processes only six people knew that they had confirmed Jobs. Mike Brewis was MD, James Murry (ex Norwich) General Manager Distribution, Peter Stewart (ex Norwich) as a director at the group level, Mick Holderness (ex Fedsure) General Manager Administration, Roger Le Crerar (ex Norwich) as consultant and myself. From the beginning we all knew that Roger should have got the GM Admin position. Given the fact that Fedsure took over Norwich, some appointments were made for political reasons.

These participants co-created the strategy for the new company and designed the appropriate structure. Key posts were identified and defined. The next step in the process involved individuals applying for these specified posts. It took just over a month to fill the key posts. Interestingly only one person took us to court on being unsuccessful with his application. Fedsure won that case. The judge ruled that the process that was followed was fair, transparent and involved all the relevant stakeholders. This was a major achievement given the tough labour laws in South Africa.

The next step was to cascade this process through the entire organisation. We followed the same process for the next level of distribution, administration, finance and actuarial, accounts and IT. Given that there were only two of us that worked as one team, we had to decide where to concentrate our efforts. In systems thinking terms we had to identify the leverage point. The strategic decision was made to concentrate on the Distribution Channel because the new strategy was a radical departure from the previous Fedsure strategy.

For example, a major complexity was the fact that Norwich was in Cape Town and Fedsure in Johannesburg, a geographical distance of 2 000km. This did not present a

problem for the Norwich people. Norwich had the technological infrastructure in place to bridge any geographical distance. Every broker consultant (BC) had a laptop with access to the Internet, intranet, e-mail and workflow. With workflow they were able to track any of their cases on the system. Via the data warehouse, they had access to all their brokers' client information. BC's could download all this information in the broker's office or at home. To become more cost effective we had actually closed down all our sales offices. The broker consultants worked from hot desks in the administration offices. Their function was to be out in the market and to sell.

In fact the next stage of the strategy was to allow some of the Norwich administration staff to work from home, because we could manage the whole processes via workflow. This was the world and the assumptions that the Norwich people brought to the merger. To our dismay we soon discovered that Fedsure had none of this technology in place. In fact Fedsure did not have an e-mail system, they communicated via the mainframe messaging system. Effectively anybody outside the system was cut off. This really complicated matters in the first few months of the merger. We could only communicate via telephone.

It was in this environment that I had to go and assist the distribution teams to co-create their strategies, define and design the appropriate processes and structures and develop a new culture. Over the next six months we flew all over the country facilitating twenty of these workshops. In between that, I had to sit in on all the executive and senior management meetings. Once again I found myself in a position where I was coaching the executives and senior management, either as teams or on a one-on-one basis. Based on my Norwich and Fedsure experience I was starting to be convinced that executive coaching could be a viable profession. When I was not facilitating workshops I was coaching executives and managers.

However, working so close and intimately with the staff out in the field gave me a very clear and holistic picture of what was going on in the organisation. I worked with the executive team and with all the teams down to the lowest teams in the hierarchy. During this time I soon realised that all was not well. Although we were successful at integrating the teams and building a new culture and new structures, these people could not do their work effectively because they did not have access to the right IT

systems and infrastructure. The problem for me was that when I reported this information back to the executive the ex FedSure executives accused me of always exaggerating and sensationalising the situation.

The frustrating thing for us was that we were working with and seeing the real situation on a weekly basis. To our surprise none of these executives had actually been out into the field to access the situation for themselves. Eventually the MD agreed to do a road show so that the executive could see the situation for themselves.

To do it effectively, my colleague and I had a number of sessions with the entire executive team where we coached them through the story of the strategy via the Balance Scorecard. To our dismay we soon discovered that each executive actually had a totally different picture of what the strategy was. This was a huge learning curve for me. They all used the same language and the same words, but when we dialogued what that meant, I soon discovered that they were all explaining different realities. They were seeing different pictures. We would use similar words, but those words meant different things in the two organisations.

Once again the whole idea of levels of complexity (Jacques and Wilber's work) and levels of consciousness with different worldviews associated with each level made so much sense to me. It is actually a scarring thing to see. When people use the same words and language and you realise that they are speaking right past each other. They just assume that they see the same picture of reality. As we tested their assumptions by using dialogue they started to realise that they were not on the same page. Once again we had used dialogue and action learning to unlock these issues.

The dilemma was how to coach them out of this mess? Frustration levels were at an all time high. Eventually we decided to facilitate them through the process making use of the Participian Facilitation System. It's a very simple process that makes use of pictures and bubbles stuck on a wall. It really was like being back in kinder garden again. We worked with simple pictures and words; we were back into the world of symbolism. It was a very powerful learning curve in my life. I soon learnt that pictures and symbols are very effective tools for learning. The more we used symbols

and pictures the easier it was for these high level executives to express themselves. Eventually we came up with the final product.

The executive agreed that the MD, GM Distribution, GM Administration, my colleague and I would go on the road show. In August 1999 the five of us started a six weeks road show. We went to every single branch in the country and involved every single staff member in the process. The response from the staff and the brokers was overwhelmingly positive. For some it was the first time in their lives that they had had the opportunity to meet such senior people in the organisation.

After every session the five of us would use the experiential learning loop to review how the session went, what we learnt, and how we could do it better next time. I would also coach them on how they could present or tell the story better. The interesting thing was that the more they told the story, the more they understood their own strategy and the more excited they got about it. For the first time I saw the strategy move from their minds to their hearts. They owned it. To me that is the power of the Balanced Scorecard (it is not the alpha or omega), but it gives people a structured process within which to tell the story of their strategy.

Despite the positive response from the people and the newfound enthusiasm of the executive, it soon became very clear that the organisation was in terrible shape. The first thing that was made very clear was that the Fedsure Norwich merger was a sideshow, most of the problems we encountered had been going on in Fedsure for years.

The major themes that developed during the road show were:

- The lack of IT infrastructure and system downtimes. In some cases some branches had been off line for four weeks. This was a huge problem. Norwich came from a strong client server environment and Fedsure was totally mainframe based. Fedsure Group IT was on a steep learning curve to get up to speed with client server environments. To make things worse, somewhere somebody in their wisdom had decided to outsource both IT



development departments. To make matters worse they were outsourced to two different companies. That increased the complexity exponentially. Not only did we have to manage the politics between Fedsure and Norwich, we also had to manage the politics between two competing IT outsourcing companies.

- The problems with product development and the time it took to get the products to market.
- Documents, files and medicals getting lost in the chaos. Given the HIV crises in this country this was a very real problem.
- Lack of management visibility.
- The administration processes were in a shambles. There was still two of everything. Two call centres, two workflow systems and two mainframe systems.
- Lack of communication from the management and between Cape Town and Johannesburg.

After the road show the MD realised that he was in a very desperate situation. The MD then asked me to go away and analyse all the information we had collected and come up with some recommendations.

Initially I wanted to analyse and model all the information in iThink. Given the time constraints and pressure we were under I realised that I did not have the time. So we set up a war room and started to draw soft systems diagrams of the situation, as we understood it. At this time I drew heavily on the experience of Roger Le Crerar. As we mapped and analysed the situation we realised something I had never thought of before. At the heart of a life company there are actually only three things that have to be managed:

- The flow of money. Premiums flowing into the organisation in terms of cash, cheques or electronic funds transfer (EFT). Money flowing out of the organisation as claims and maturities, either as cheques or EFT's.
- Paper documents.
- Electronic information like faxes, e-mail and electronic images.

As we drew the soft systems map I realised that we could reduce the three into one, namely electronic information. Given that Norwich had a national workflow system and that we had decided to go with that system, it was very possible. We could scan all applications or queries at source. We could integrate the fax, e-mail and EFT system with workflow. The only time paper would come into the process was at the very end when we had to print a physical contract. We could move the money out and into the client's accounts via EFT. That would prevent an enormous amount of fraud. Furthermore every person in the company could have access to the workflow system. We could set the security levels so that admin staff could be authorised to do their work and broker consultants would have read only access. Everybody could see exactly where a case was in the process. This would alleviate some of the communication problems.

I presented these findings at a special strategy meeting held in September 1999 in Cape Town. At that meeting we made the following strategy decisions:

- One workflow system for both companies was now a critically important project. Once again it was agreed that we would go with the Norwich system.
- That Cape Town had the best call centre and most qualified staff. Furthermore, staff costs in Cape Town were much lower than Johannesburg, thereby being much more cost effective. As a result we decided that we would close down the Johannesburg operations and move everything to Cape Town. A perfectly legitimate business decision.
- I was requested to stop the work that I was doing on merging the companies and help rebuild some of the IT infrastructure that could improve communications in the company.

Within a week some of these decisions were reversed. The MD was told in no uncertain terms that he could not close Johannesburg down. He could move the call centre to Cape Town but all administration would be done in Johannesburg. This made it very clear to us that Fedsure had a hidden agenda.

Be that as it may, I still had to come up with a communications solution. The first thing that I did was to consult the IT people whom I used to manage when I ran the

workflow project. I invited them to show me what new systems they had developed since I left. I was especially interested in the data warehouse because we ran the call centre of that data warehouse. To my amazement they were already pulling the Fedsure data into that warehouse. This meant that the call centre already had an integrated view of Fedsure and Norwich's clients, including the Norwich unit trust clients. Given that the warehouse was written in SQL I enquired as to how long it would take to Web enable the call centre? Within a month they had Web enabled the call centre. Effectively via the Internet and intranet every PC in the company was turned into a call centre. Every single person had the same integrated view of the client as the people in the call centre. This was the first time something like that had been done in South Africa. To date I don't know of any company that has done it since. We launched the system at a sales conference in January 2000.

Based on the success of this project I was invited to takeover the management of the IT people responsible for developing the Internet, intranet, data warehouse and the call centre. My mandate was to build the infrastructure we needed. The next big project I took on was to install two state of the art videoconference centres in Cape Town and Johannesburg. The first phase was completed and included smart boards. This improved communication within the company substantially. The second phase would have included video streaming to every PC in the company. The infrastructure was all put in place, all that was needed was for the camera manufactures to release the cameras in the market. We were sold the product with the promise that it would be in the market by the time we finished installing the videoconference centres. In reality it took much longer. The lesson I learnt was not to buy into technology until it has been in the market and thoroughly tested.

In June my title officially changed to Executive Manager CRM and E-Commerce. My mandate was to develop a CRM and e-commerce strategy for the company as well as improving the service levels in the call centre. The former was relatively easy to do. I put together a core team consisting of Richard Jones (project manager), Alan Shorten (chief business analyst), Carolyn Wissema (information architect) and I. Together we came up with a CRM strategy as to how we would go about implementing it. Our overriding goal was to have one integrated view of the client, both in terms of the structured data (information in the databases) and unstructured data (faxes, e-mails,

letters etc). When we presented the plan to the executive they gave us the go ahead to buy the package we wanted to buy. Within a month we were told to halt the entire processes because they were restructuring the entire Fedsure Group.

In the meantime I tried to come to grips with the problems we had in the call centre. Despite the fact that the Life Executive had decided to use the Norwich workflow system, Fedsure Group IT had mandated in December 1999 that the entire group would convert to the new Eastman Kodak workflow system. This we only discovered late in January 2000. We were, however, assured that the system would be converted on time. By mid June we still had no workflow system. By then our turnaround times in the back office had gone from 2 days to 45 days. The call centre had no workflow system because they killed the old Norwich system. Slowly but surely I started to realise that we were grasping at straws. The current MD actually had no power. All our decisions were being overturned in Johannesburg. I also started to realise that it would be virtually impossible to reverse the situation. Another really powerful lesson in how business is not run on rational principles but by organisational politics.

By the end of July 2000 the Group was restructured. They formed a new company called Fedsure Retail and Financial Services under the group strategist John Green. Effectively they now wanted to merge the Life, Group Benefits, Credit Life and Unit Trust companies into one. In my opinion this latest move would lead to the eventual demise of the Fedsure Group. We were all still battling to merge the various lines of business and now they wanted to form one company. Most executives could not even cope with the current levels of complexity, now the complexity would increase exponentially. At this point I seriously considered leaving the company.

John Green the new MD of Fedsure Retail and Financial Service asked me to stay on and run the CRM project for the entire group. Given that we had already done most of the work we submitted the proposals to John in September 2000. John was very happy with our work and asked us to go ahead. However, within three weeks he phoned me to ask me whether I was prepared to relocate to Johannesburg. That was one thing I was not prepared to do.

Given the new circumstances and my interest in executive coaching I opted to start negotiating for a retrenchment package. I also believed that Fedsure was in such deep trouble that it would be impossible to turn the company around. I officially ended my career at Fedsure in February 2001 to start my executive coaching practice. In June 2001 Investec Bank Fedsure's biggest shareholder stepped in and took over the company.

Given my extensive experience with coaching executives and all that I had learnt over the years, I established my own company specializing in executive coaching, strategy formulation, change management and organizational design. Subsequent to this I have managed to establish an executive coaching practice in South Africa. Having established a coaching practice, I felt the need to become better qualified as a coach. My MBA degree gave me the theoretical business background and my business experience gave me a solid experiential base. My qualification as a Personal Fitness Trainer gave me a good bases for performance coaching, but I felt that I needed more. I spent some time investigating all the available coaching courses. All the courses I investigated seemed over simplified. None of them really catered for the complexity that I was used to working with. All taught a single coaching model and you were evaluated on that model. When the Middlesex course became available in South Africa I jumped at the opportunity. What appealed to me was the fact that I was expected to develop my own coaching model, that it was based on Work Based Learning and that an international academic institution accredited it.

As a result of my working experience and as part of the requirements for this doctoral programme I developed a theoretical integrated coaching model. Although it must be emphasised that at the time the model existed as a broad conceptual construct in the form of a PowerPoint presentation only, it was in an embryonic form. The model still had to be written up and developed completely. I named this model the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It is integrated in that it caters for E.F. Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge and Ken Wilber's (1996) Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses David Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Sheila Harri-Augstein

and Laurie Thomas's (1991) concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool.

#### **1.4 Project context**

An opportunity arose to apply the embryonic Integrated Experiential Coaching Model in a six-month pilot-coaching project within T-Systems South Africa. The organisation is an Information Technology (IT) outsourcing company that specialises in large and complex mainframe, network and server outsourcing contracts. T-Systems South Africa is a subsidiary of T-Systems International, the IT division of Deutsche Telecom. The South African subsidiary came into existence about four years ago and has a very interesting history. It was formed with the merger of Info Plan; the IT division of the old South African Defence Force, and Daimler Chrysler's IT Infrastructure division. Shortly after this, the company landed one of the biggest outsource contracts in South Africa. It won a five-year contract to manage the mainframe, network, servers and desktops for Sanlam Life, the second largest Life Office in South Africa. As part of that contract it inherited all the relevant IT staff from Sanlam. Shortly after winning this contract, the company was bought by Deutsche Telecom and became T-Systems South Africa. In the years that followed it won three more major contracts. In the first four years its growth was substantial but has subsequently slowed.

It was in this context, that T-Systems South Africa was interested in exploring executive coaching as a means of developing their management and leadership's ability to better manage and lead the organisation. I was awarded the contract as a result of the embryonic Integrated Experiential Coaching Model that I had developed. The model aims to address the problem of integration and managerial complexity. The advantage of this model is that it gives the clients an integrated framework and methodology to think, experiment, reflect and act within the system that they operate and manage. It allows the client to see how all the seemingly disparate initiatives within the organisation actually support and build on each other. The theoretical framework provides a conceptual map that aims to help simplify the complexity involved in managing large modern dynamic organisations.

The initial idea was to apply the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and to test its validity. It soon became apparent that due to the complexity of the model, the environment and the number of variables involved that this was an unrealistic idea. The variables involved were so numerous that it was impossible to even generate a hypothesis to be tested. Instead it was decided to do a piece of exploratory phenomenological research, in order to generate a hypothesis for possible future research. The area of research would be limited to and be focused on the left Upper-Left Quadrant of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, the interior domain of the individual. I had sold my services to the company based on the fact; that I would help to facilitate self-organised learning in adults via coaching. Did that actually happen? Did self-organised learning really take place? Had the coachees become more effective at facilitating and managing their own learning? The question that fascinated me was what did people actually learn in this processes? Was the learning limited to what was made explicit in the learning contract or was there some other learning happening at a deeper or higher level? What did they learn about themselves? What were the assumptions that they had about learning that were not made explicit? Could they reflect at a higher level than the reflection that is done in the learning contract? Did they actually reflect at a higher level? What had this learning journey meant to them? What really was the essence and meaning of learning? These were the types of issues and questions that I wanted to explore in the research.

### **1.5 Use of literature**

Due to my years of experience in large organisations and given the kind of work I did (as put out in Section 1.3) I already had a very good understanding and working knowledge of the following prime texts; Wilber (1995), Schumacher (1978), Jaques and Clements (1997), Kaplan and Norton (1996), Galbraith, Downey and Kates (2002), Rehm (1997) and Oshery (1999). Having used these texts extensively in the past I knew from the outset that they would play a critical role in any model that I was to develop. Through my iCoach and Middlesex University training I was exposed to the work of Kolb (1984), Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991), Peltier (2001) and Kilburg (2000). It was while doing my research on phenomenology for my DPS 4825 project that I came across the work of Moustakas (1994) and Spinelli (1998).

The Integral Model of Wilber (1995), Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model, Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge, Harri-Augstein and Thomas's (1991) Learning Conversations and Jaques and Clements's (1997) Stratified Systems Theory were the primary texts consulted to develop the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. Given that Wilber is the author of 19 books, in which he continuously refined and redefined his thinking, Visser's (2003) summary text of Wilber's work became another prime source to consult.

The next level of integration involved adding a business context to the Integrative Experiential Coaching Model to make it relevant to executive coaching. This was done by incorporating strategy formulation via the Balanced Scorecard of Kaplan and Norton (1996) and organisational design principles, with reference to the work of Galbraith, Downey and Kates (2002) and Rehm (1997). Having set the business context, I then explored the individual leadership competencies of Jaques and Clement (1997) and how those competencies could help an executive cope with managerial complexity. What became clear is that within the business context, coaching is not therapy. Using the work of Peltier (2001) a clear distinction was made between coaching and therapy. Lastly, referring to the work of Oshery (1999) and Kilburg (2000) it was shown that behavioural problems manifested by individuals within an organisation could be intrapsychic or due to systemic organisational design problems or even a combination of both.

When it became clear that the research would be exploratory phenomenological research a search was done on the EBSCO HOST Research Database at the University of Stellenbosch, South Africa. The search covered the following databases:

- Academic Search Premier: The world's largest academic multi-disciplinary database that provides full text for nearly 4 000 scholarly publications, including full text for nearly 3 100 peer review journals. Coverage spans virtually every area of academic study and offers information dating as far back as 1975. This database is updated on a daily basis via EBSCO host.
- Business Source Premier: As the world's largest full text business database it provides full text for nearly 3 300 scholarly business journals, including full text



for more than 1 000 peer-review business publications. Coverage includes virtually all subject areas related to business. This database provides full text (PDF) for more than 300 of the top scholarly journals dating as far back as 1922. This database is updated on a daily basis via EBSCO host.

- MasterFILE Premier: Designed specifically for public libraries, this multidisciplinary database provides full text for nearly 1 950 general reference publications with full text information dating as far back as 1975. Covering virtually every subject area of general interest, MasterFILE Premier also includes 315 full text reference books, nearly 100 000 biographies, 76 000 primary source documents, and an image collection of 116 000 photos, maps and flags. This database is updated on a daily basis via EBSCO host.

The following key words returned nothing, phenomenology and coaching, phenomenological experience of coaching, experience of being coached, phenomenological research on coaching and phenomenology and experiential learning. Executive Coaching returned 203 articles where the majority of the articles focused on what executive coaching is. Only one article involved quasi research that was done on the effectiveness of executive coaching. Research on coaching returned 3 articles all of which were research papers concerned with sports coaching. It therefore became apparent that this could be an original research project.

The primary texts for research methodologies were Mouton (2001), de Vos, Strydom, Fouche and Delport (2002) and Moustakas (1994). Spinelli (1998) was an important text to help clarify and learn about phenomenology. Having gone through the process I realised that the Transcendental Phenomenology method of Moustakas (1994) could easily be integrated with the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.

## **1.6 Chapter divisions**

Chapter two is the literature review and involves the development and completion of the final Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber's (1995) Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness,

especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Harri-Augstein and Thomas's (1991) concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool.

Chapter three places the theoretical Integrative Experiential Coaching Model in a business context. This is done by incorporating strategy formulation via the Balanced Scorecard of Kaplan and Norton (1996) and organisational design principles, with reference to the work of Galbraith et al. (2002) and Rehm (1997). Having set the business context, the chapter then explores the individual leadership competencies of Jaques and Clement (1997) and how those competencies could help an executive cope with managerial complexity. What becomes clear is that within the business context, coaching is not therapy. Using the work of Peltier (2001) a clear distinction is made between coaching and therapy. Lastly, referring to the work of Oshery (1999) and Kilburg (2000) it is shown that behavioural problems manifested by individuals within an organisation could be intrapsychic or due to systemic organisational design problems or even a combination of both.

Chapter four deals with the research design and methodology. It starts by setting the organisational context in which the research project took place. It then mentions how the contracting and coaching sessions were done and set up. Having set the overall context, it moves into how the research was designed and the selection of the research methodology. This involved the selection of the co-researchers and how the data for the research was collected. It then goes on to describe how the data was analysed and processed.

Chapter five presents the findings of the research. It starts by presenting the composite textural description in terms of the common themes that arose for the group as a whole. It then moves on to develop a composite structural description of the group as a whole. Here the aim is to try and understand how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced. By integrating the composite textural description and the composite structural description a synthesis of the meaning and essences of the experiences of the group as a whole is defined. The integrity of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is briefly discussed. Finally it presents the research hypothesis that was generated.

Chapter six starts with a general reflection to explore how the findings of the research ties back to similar or other studies. It then explores the conclusions in terms of the implications of this research for the company, the profession of coaching and finally for the author. Limitations of the research project are explored as well. The chapter concludes with recommendations for future research and some personal reflections on what I learnt from the project.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Model development and literature review**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This chapter starts with the story behind the evolution of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. That is, how the model was developed over time and why the various theories were incorporated into the model. The chapter then deals with the integration of the Integral Model of Wilber (1995), Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model, Transcendental Phenomenology of Moustakas (1994), Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge, Harri-Augstein and Thomas's (1991) Learning Conversations and Jaques and Clements's (1997) Stratified Systems Theory to develop a new theoretical coaching model that I call the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. This model proposes that coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher's Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber's Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb's Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Harri-Augstein and Thomas's concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool.

#### **2.2 The evolution of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model**

The story behind the development of this model actually starts in the mid 90's. I had completed my MBA degree in 1993 and joined Norwich Life in that same year. During my MBA Studies I was highly impressed with Systems Thinking. I was very fortunate that I had trained under two of the greatest Systems Thinkers South Africa has ever produced. So it is not surprising that as soon as I got the opportunity to apply

Systems Thinking I did so via means of Systems Dynamic modelling. I used my systems thinking skills to model business processes and the workflow systems in a Systems Dynamics package called iThink at Norwich Life. As a result of this my interest in Systems Thinking continued to grow.

During the 90's another interesting development started to take place within the business environment. For the first time various business people and authors started to talk about the need to incorporate human spirituality into the workplace. Needless to say, that as a trained theologian it was an area that immediately attracted my attention. I started to read about the subject as widely as possible. The first thing that struck me was that all the books that I read only dealt with Eastern Spirituality. Nowhere could I find anybody dealing with Western Spirituality in the workplace. Knowing that Western Spirituality had a rich meditative tradition, I started to think about the possibility of doing a PhD which combined Western Spirituality and Systems Thinking. Having given it some thought I set up a meeting with my ex professor of theology, Felicity Edwards of Rhodes University, and discussed the possibilities with her. She kept asking me why I wanted to use Systems Thinking, and why I was so excited about it. My response to her was that Systems Thinking was very holistic. I remember her ending the meeting with the following challenge, "go and read Ken Wilber's work and when you understand the breadth of his work call me again and tell me if you still think that Systems Thinking is holistic." That challenge started me on a whole new journey. I started to read as much of Wilber's work that I could lay my hands on. Having read ten of Wilber's books I was struck by his ability to synthesise so much information into a very coherent model that not only attracted me intellectually but helped me to understand some of the practical issues that I was struggling with on a day to day basis in business. His levels of consciousness made me realise why people use the same language but experience totally different realities. Executives would talk about strategy as if they are all talking about the same thing, yet when probed they would be seeing totally different realities or worlds. Some would be talking five years into the future, while others were talking about next year. They lived in totally different worlds. In so doing Wilber was saying a very similar thing to Elliot Jacques's Stratified Systems Theory. The only difference was that Wilber extended his levels of consciousness into the transpersonal realms, whereas Jacques stops at the rational levels of human development. Needless to say as a trained theologian

Wilber's model really appealed to me because it catered for transpersonal experiences. Secondly his model integrated Eastern and Western Spirituality with Western developmental psychology which further attracted me to his work. But more importantly his four quadrant model allowed for both human spirituality and empirical science to co-exist together. So Wilber had already addressed the issue that I wanted to explore in a PhD. Furthermore, I had to agree with Wilber and Edwards that Systems Thinking was not as holistic as I had originally thought. Wilber's model gave me a more holistic way of thinking and seeing my reality. Needless to say I was highly impressed by Wilber's work. The only thing I found very frustrating was that Wilber mapped out human development very precisely and logically, but he never developed an integrated developmental process. His work is all about the what and the why, but there is no how. Be that as it may as I entered this doctoral programme I knew that somehow Wilber's work would have a major influence on the model that I would develop as part of the requirements for this course.

Prior to starting this doctoral programme I had learnt about Kolb and his Experiential Learning Cycle from RGA Consulting while doing the transformational work at Norwich Life. I used the learning cycle extensively while doing the merger of Norwich and Fedsure and was impressed by how simple yet powerful the learning cycle was. All the facilitation that I did at the time involved taking people through the learning cycle in a disciplined and structured way. Yet despite this working knowledge of Kolb's learning cycle I had never read his book, which by the way was very unusual for me. When I started this doctoral programme it soon became very clear that the programme was very heavily influenced by Kolb's Experiential Learning process. As a result I decided that it would be in my interest to read and better understand Kolb's theory. I was immediately struck by the depth of his theory; I had had no idea of how powerful the theory actually was. The more I read Kolb the more I realised that Kolb was saying very similar things to Wilber. The question that started to haunt me more and more was why does Wilber not refer to Kolb and vice versa? Somehow I knew that Wilber and Kolb could be integrated but I just could not see how. This frustration continued for about two months, yet the question of how to integrate the two would not leave me. Yet at the same time the complexity of both models continued to overwhelm me. Finally in desperation I turned to a method that has always worked for me when I get overwhelmed by complexity, I start to draw

pictures, symbols or diagrams. I try to simplify the complexity by drawing diagrams. (iThink modelling and soft systems diagrams had taught me just how powerfully simple diagrams could be, they often communicate so much more than words.) About 12 o'clock the one evening I drew Wilber's model on one piece of paper and Kolb's learning cycle on another. I remember spinning Kolb's model around and around in absolute desperation. I knew the two could be integrated, but the how was alluding me. Just when I was about to call it a night and go to bed, I suddenly "saw" the integration. As a result of spinning the Kolb diagram around and around I saw that just by changing Kolb's directional flow the two models integrated seamlessly. It suddenly dawned on me that Wilber's model provided an integrated model for human growth and development and that Kolb's model provided a way or method for integrated growth and development. Wilber's model provided the what and the why, whereas Kolb's model provided the how. Needless to say I was ecstatic because I knew I had stumbled onto something meaningful for me. I knew that Wilber and Kolb would be the Meta theories that would underpin my coaching model. In practice I was using experiential learning extensively in my coaching practice in any case. In my coaching sessions I was just facilitating the experiential learning process on a one on one basis always aware that Wilber's model was having an influence, but now I saw the integration cognitively.

By this time we had already covered and learnt about Harri-Augstein and Thomas's Learning Conversations and role played with Personal Learning Contracts on the programme. It then dawned on me that Personal Learning Contracts are a very simple, structured yet practical way to manage experiential learning conversations. It could give the coaching sessions more structure, which was important to me because I had often felt that my coaching approach was too unstructured for business executives. But Learning Conversations also taught me that it was ok to fluctuate between very structured task conversations and unstructured life relevance conversations. More importantly, it taught that this was natural during any learning conversation. That knowledge gave me permission to relax more in my approach to coaching. But level three conversations appealed to me the most, conversations about learning, because it tied in so beautifully with Kolb's Experiential Learning. Having read Leonard's work on Mastery I was already convinced that the ability to learn was the most fundamental

skill that any human being can learn. Which in-turn ties in with Kolb's idea that we grow and develop through learning.

By now I knew that I had the conceptual skeleton of my coaching model. The challenge as always was to communicate this model to both Professors David Lane and Mike van Oudshoorn and prospective clients. Again I reverted to the method that works for me; namely the drawing of pictures and diagrams. I drew up a PowerPoint presentation consisting of a number of diagrams and a few text slides and presented this to David and Mike early in 2003. Both felt that I was on to something very powerful and meaningful and encouraged me to develop the model even further. David pointed out that over the years I had synthesised an enormous amount of experience and knowledge but that it had become unconscious over time. He encouraged me to make it all explicit. The embryonic Integrated Experiential Coaching Model had come into existence.

While doing research into various research methodologies I was struck by the similarities between Kolb's model and phenomenology. I found myself often reflecting on these similarities in my journal. The more familiar I became with phenomenology the more convinced I was that phenomenology could easily be integrated with Kolb. When I finally came across Moustakas's Transcendental Phenomenology I was convinced that he and Kolb were saying the same thing. I discussed this at some length with David and decided to integrate phenomenology into the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. In my opinion this was a logical integration because I saw Transcendental Phenomenology as a more mature form of Experiential Learning. By integrating the two I made sure that the research methodology and coaching model would support each other. I would use Experiential Learning as the coaching methodology and Transcendental Phenomenology as the research methodology.

Up until then all the integration had been done via diagrams only. The next step was to move beyond the embryonic Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and too write up the theory underpinning the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. The rest of this chapter involves the writing up of that theory.



### 2.3 The theory underpinning the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model

This section involves the development of an integrated coaching model. I have named this model the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber's (1995) Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Harri-Augstein and Thomas's (1991) concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development.

In 1924 General Smuts wrote *Holism and Evolution*. He proposed that life evolved and continues to evolve into higher levels of complexity and wholeness. Life evolved out of matter, mind evolved out of life and spirit evolved out of mind. More importantly this evolution forms an integrated whole, that is to say there is a continuous progression towards integration and unity. This in itself is not a new idea. Schumacher (1978), an economist, points out that the four great Levels of Being have been around for thousands of years and this teaching can be found in all the great wisdom traditions of the world. The higher levels of evolution comprise all the lower levels. Hence all four levels exist in the human being. Schumacher (1978) uses the following formula to describe this evolutionary process,

Mineral = m

Plants = m + x

Animals = m + x + y

Man = m + x + y + z

Where, m + x + y + z = mineral + life + consciousness + self- awareness. He refines this formula even further, where;

The body = m + x

The soul = y

And Spirit = z

Smuts (1973) used the terms matter, life and spirit.

Not only is man the highest evolved being, both Smuts (1973) and Schumacher (1978) point out that man has an inner and outer world. There is the external world that can be seen and observed via behaviour and the inner world of thoughts and feelings. Empirical science has had no problem with the former. In this paradigm, if it can be seen and measured then it is real. Empirical science has, however, had and continues to have a problem with the inner world. The problem is compounded even further as one progresses up the levels of evolutionary development. Traditionally physics and chemistry are seen to be the more “mature” sciences, yet they deal with the most basic element in evolution, namely matter. As one advances up the evolutionary chain, things become vaguer. Biology is the science of the study of life, but what is this thing called life? To get around this vague question biology, in order to stay “scientific”, restricts itself to purely material or physical elements. As one moves into the domains of consciousness and self-awareness the vagueness increases exponentially. It is here that empirical science starts to reach its limitations. It cannot study the inner domain of man, which is a higher development in the evolutionary process than the external body. Schumacher (1978) points out that higher levels of development always implies “more inner”, while lower implies more “external and more outer”.

For this reason, Smuts (1973) believed that the world needed a new discipline to study the pinnacle of evolution. He called this discipline “Personology”, since in his view; personality is the supreme whole of evolution. It is a structure that has built on the previous structures of matter, life and mind. Although Smuts (1973) sees the mind as the “*most important and conspicuous constituent*” of this evolutionary process, the body is an integral part that gives “*the intimate flavour of humanity to Personality.*” However, the whole is more important than the parts. “*The fact is that all these theories have an element of truth; the real explanation being that Mind and Body are elements in the whole of personality; and that this whole is an inner creative, recreative and transformative activity, which accounts for all that happens in the Personality as between its component elements. No explanation will hold water which ignores the most important factor of all in the situation, and that is the holistic Personality itself. Holism is the real creative agent, and not the entities suggested by the above philosophers*” (Smuts, 1973: 261-262).

There is therefore a “*creative Holism in Personality*”. Even though my body and mental structure can have some resemblance to my parents and ancestors my personality is indisputably mine. The personality is not inherited; it is a creative novelty in every human being that makes every person a unique individual. The discipline of “Personology” would therefore have to take into account this creative Holism and incorporate all the levels of evolutionary development as well as the inner and outer aspects of the personality. It would incorporate the findings of empirical science but go beyond it. Smuts (1973) argues that psychology does not “materially assist” in the study of personality, since psychology deals with the average or generalized individual and in so doing it ignores the individual uniqueness of the personality. At the same time psychology limits itself even further by only dealing with the mental point of view which is only one aspect of personality. His proposed way of studying and developing this discipline was very interesting. He suggested that “Personology” should be studied by analyzing the biographies of personalities as a whole. This study should be done synthetically and not analytically as in the case of psychology. This would enable the researcher to discover the materials that can help formulate the laws of personal evolution. Smuts (1973) called this the science of “Biography” and he believed that it would form the basis of a “new Ethic and Metaphysic” which would have a truer spiritual outlook on personality.

The selection of lives to study would be critical. Interestingly enough Smuts (1973) mentions a class of people who would be unsuitable for this kind of scientific study, those who do not have an inner self at all. These are people whose activities and interests are all of an external character. They have no inner life. Smuts (1973) points out that this is a common feature amongst public figures, administrators and business people. Their whole lives seem to be absorbed by the practical interest of their work. They might even be exceptional at what they do, but their inner lives have died as a result of the pressure of external affairs and duties. They might even have great gifts of leadership and have striking and impressive personalities. Yet they lack inwardness, an inner spiritual life, which according to Smuts (1973) is the most favourable medium for the study of Personality. “*The fact is that the real indefinable quality of true Personality is inward and is not reflected in the life of unrelieved externality which such people live*” (Smuts, 1973:287). These are wise words from a

very successful public figure, the only man who was a signatory to both the founding of the League of Nations and the United Nations. His vision was that we would be able to find and study the lives of people who lived strong inner and outer lives, namely; integrated personalities. Sadly, business people often do not fit this profile.

Schumacher (1978) expressed the same concern. We need to study the “inner experience” as well as the “outer appearance.” He took the notion even further and included the context in which the individual finds him or herself. Hence he speaks about the Four Fields of Knowledge. He refers to the “I” the individual and “The World” the communal, both of which have an inner and outer aspect. There is the “I – inner”, “The World – Inner”, “I – outer” and “The World – outer”. For a truly integrated study of the human personality we need to have knowledge of all four fields. Given the demands of modern business, business people tend to spend the bulk of their lives in the two outer domains and tend to neglect or sacrifice the inner domains. Business training and development programmes have tended to focus on the outer domains, because they are easier to see and to measure. Yet what so many wise people and sages have taught us throughout the ages is that it is in the inner domains that the next level of evolutionary development is to be unleashed. The aim is not to deny any of the domains or levels of evolution, but rather to integrate them into a more holistic approach.

Modern business and management theory seems to be particularly poor at being able to develop an integrated approach to executive development. What seems to be missing is an overarching Meta model that integrates business theory and practice. In this chapter a theoretical Meta-integrated model for coaching will be developed. A Meta-integrated model can be defined as a model containing many other models. It is not new information; it is a synthesis of existing theories and models.

## **2.4 Wilber’s Integrated Model**

Wilber is the author of 21 books and according to Visser (2003) he is the most translated American of academic books. To try and do justice to his work through a brief introduction is virtually impossible. This study is not an attempt to summarize his work, instead only sections of his work that are relevant to this study will be

explored. In so doing, large sections of his work will not be dealt with. The genius of Wilber (1995) is in his ability to synthesis an enormous amount of information. He is well known for the work that he has done in integrating Western psychology and Eastern spirituality. His Four Quadrant Model is a synthesis of various disciples and includes the works of Smuts (1973) and Schumacher (1978). The Four Quadrant model is best described by making use of Figure 2.1.

Interior	Exterior	
Individual Experience & Consciousness	Body & Behaviour	Individual
•Thoughts/ambitions	•Neuro – muscular system	
•Feelings	•Genetics	Communal or Collective
•Mood	•Body sensations	
•Sensory input	•Behaviour	
•Images	•Actions	
Group Membership	Social System	Communal or Collective
•Language	•Natural & Human made Systems	
•Social World	•Technology	
•Rituals / History	•Processes & Structures	
•Customs	•Physical laws	
•Culture – organisation/ family	•Objects	

Figure 2.1. Wilber's Integrative Model

Source: Adapted from Wilber (1996: 71)

Wilber's (1995) four quadrants correspond to Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge. According to Wilber (1995) any integrated model or theory has to take cognizance of all four quadrants. The individual is always part of a collective or communal body of people. One of his central postulates is that everything exists within a context. It is very difficult to work with an individual if there is absolutely no understanding of the collective consciousness out of which the individual arises, because nothing can be understood independently of the context.

For both the individual and the communal there is an exterior and an interior domain. In Wilber's (1995) model, the top right hand quadrant deals with the individual's exterior domain. It is that aspect of the individual that can be identified with the

senses. It is the body and its behaviour. It can be seen and measured and consists of things like; the neuro-muscular system, genetics, behaviour and actions. For example, if an individual is depressed a trained technician can do a CAT scan and notice that the neural patterns are working in a certain way that has been medically identified as a pattern associated with depression. To treat the depression, a psychiatrist can prescribe Prozac® to manage the condition, a totally legitimate medical solution to the problem. However, there is no way that modern medicine can identify why the person is depressed by making use of the right hand quadrant. To identify the “why” the psychiatrist has to move into the upper left hand quadrant, and enter into a dialogue with the patient to explore the interior world of the patient. This is the world of inner experience and consciousness, much vaguer and fuzzier than the upper right hand quadrant. It is the domain of thoughts, ambitions, feelings, moods and images. Yet it is a world that both Smuts (1973) and Schumacher (1978) see as being so critical for the higher advancement of mankind.

The bottom right hand quadrant is the exterior manifestation of the collective. It is the domain of social systems and would include things like natural and human made systems, technology, processes and structures, physical laws and objects. It is the collective systems that can be identified with the human senses. In Wilber’s (1995) model this is the domain of Systems Thinking. Unlike many who believe that Systems Thinking is holistic and the solution too reductionism, Wilber (1995) is of the opinion that it is not. In fact he refers to systems thinking as “subtle reductionism” in that the general tendency of systems thinkers is to deny the inner domain of the system. Classical systems’ thinking focuses its attention on that which can be seen or measured. They can tell you how a system behaves or what its behaviour is, but it does not explore why the system behaves as it does. That is the domain of the bottom left hand-quadrant. It is the domain of group membership of things such as language, customs, rituals, history and culture. Individuals are very much influenced by this domain, for example by the culture in which they grew up. The influence of this domain is very powerful, more so than most individuals would like to admit. South Africa and the whole issue of Affirmative Action is a prime example of the power of this domain. Companies are battling to deal with all the cultural biases that exist within groups and individuals. Executives will readily admit that the most difficult part of their jobs is to change and manage the culture of the organization. The

ineffective management of cultural issues has effectively led to the failure of many mergers and acquisitions.

Through applying some thought to the four quadrant model (Figure 2.2) it soon becomes apparent that no one discipline or profession can lay claim to having the ultimate truth. Every profession or discipline contains a partial truth. The value of Wilber's (1995) model is that it provides a framework to identify where that partial truth applies. Behavioural psychology for example contains partial truths, and it is restricted to the upper right hand quadrant. It cannot be used to treat a patient with an existential crisis. That is the domain of Logo therapy, for example, which resides in the upper-left quadrant. In Wilber's model the right-hand quadrants are the world of empirical science. Wilber (1995) refers to this as "flatland" because every thing in these quadrants can be identified with the physical senses and it can be measured and manipulated. The language that is used to refer to these quadrants is "it" because it consists of the behavioural (objective) and the social (interobjective). The beauty of Wilber's (1995) model is that it gives complete legitimacy to the world of empirical science, whether that is reductionism or the so called "new sciences" of quantum mechanics. Every discipline contains a partial truth and the measure of "objective truth" is different for every quadrant. In the Upper-Right quadrant objective truth is sought through the empirical establishment of perceivable facts. The Upper-Left hand quadrant is the domain of the inner world of the individual. Here the measure is truthfulness, which is the accurate perception of an individual of his or her inner state. What is the objective truth when you are dealing with different cultures? There is no objective truth. Therefore in the Lower-Left quadrant it is about the justness of the mutual understanding amongst different individuals. In the Lower-Right quadrant it is about how the individual fits into the larger system, so the measure is the functional fit.

Dialogue Phenomenology Consciousness	Monolog Empirical Form
<b>Truthfulness</b> Integrity Trustworthiness  I	<b>Truth</b> Correspondence Representation  it
 we	 it
<b>Justness</b> Cultural fit Mutual understanding	<b>Functional Fit</b> Systems theory web Structural-functionalism

Figure 2.2. Measures of Truth

Source: Adapted from Wilber (1996: 107)

The left hand quadrants deal with consciousness and hence empirical science is of no value. In these quadrants qualitative and phenomenological research is more appropriate and valid. The language used in these quadrants are “I and We” because it deals with the intentional (subjective) and cultural (intersubjective). Wilber (1995) points out that the right hand quadrants have traditionally been very strong in Western thinking, whereas Eastern thinking has been very strong in the upper left-hand quadrant.

Wilber’s (1995) model is, however, not limited to the Four Fields of Knowledge. The model incorporates the evolutionary levels of consciousness as represented in Figure 2.3. Like Smuts (1973) and Schumacher (1978), he believes that life has evolved from matter to life, from life to mind, from mind to soul and from soul to Spirit. For a detailed account of Wilber’s developmental model and levels of consciousness please refer to Appendix 1.



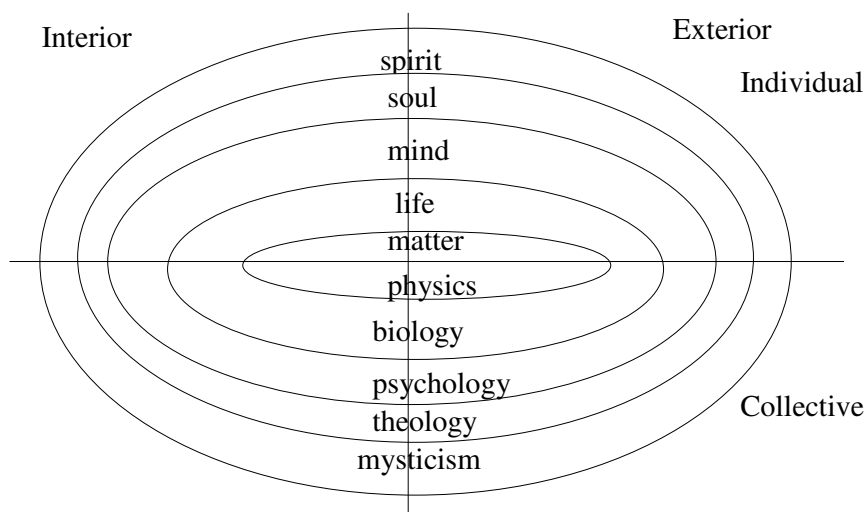


Figure 2.3. Evolution of Consciousness

Source: Adapted from Wilber (2000: 6)

## 2.5 Integrative growth and development

Having an integrated framework for growth and development is fine, the question of course is how does one facilitate this growth and development within individuals or the culture within which the individual lives and operates? Interestingly enough Wilber does not offer an integrated developmental methodology. Part of the reason could be that he refers to himself as a pandit as opposed to a guru. Wilber (2000) believes that a pandit does not accept devotees, whereas a guru does. Pandits are usually scholars of a tradition and spend their time researching, writing and teaching. They do not engage in spiritual or therapeutic work with individuals, that is the domain of gurus and therapists. To the latter we can also add the profession of coaching. The point is that anybody looking to find an integrated developmental methodology in Wilber's work will be disappointed as they will not find one. Wilber's view is "work it out for yourself." Wilber (2000) does, however, suggest that any individual who wants to grow in an integral way, practice a number of disciplines at the same time. Disciplines should, however, cover all four quadrants.

According to Wilber (2000) the general idea is to take a practice from each of the levels of being, body, mind, soul and spirit and exercise all of them to the best of your ability. The aim is to practice them individually and collectively and to find those disciplines that suit the individual and that are practically possible. In his view the more categories that are engaged, the more effective they all become. The problem is that people tend to concentrate on only one discipline which leads to individuals not growing in an integrated way.

## **2.6 An alternative integrated model**

Given the time and resource constraints and the pressure that most executives live under in modern corporations, it is highly unlikely that Wilber's approach is pragmatic for these individuals. The question has to be asked if there is not a more pragmatic approach that can be used to help individuals develop in an integrated way. One possibility is the Diamond Approach developed by H.A. Almaas (2002). Like Wilber, Almaas has been working on an integrated approach to human development that incorporates both Western psychology and spiritual wisdom. In his book *The Eye of the Spirit* Wilber (1998) gives a thirteen page critique of Almaas's work. His main criticism is that Almaas falls into the romantic notion of the prepersonal being the same as the transpersonal. In so doing he is supporting the Pre / Trans fallacy. However, Almaas has been able to develop an integrated praxis which Wilber has not. And it is because of this, that Wilber (1998) holds Almaas's work in such high esteem despite the criticism that he levels against parts of his theory. *"Here I will simply say that, in my opinion, the Diamond Approach is a superb combination of some of the best Western psychology with ancient (spiritual) wisdom. It is one type of a more integral approach, uniting Ascending and Descending, spiritual and psychological, into a coherent and effective form of inner work"* and *"This, nonetheless, is an extraordinary achievement, and certainly ranks it as one of the premier transformative technologies now available on any sort of widespread scale."* (Wilber, 1998: 267; 372).

On one level Almaas's (2002) methodology is very simple, yet at another level it is very complex and involved. It is simple because all that is required of any individual is an open – ended exploration into the immediacy of their own experience. It is about

continuously inquiring into one's own personal experience. The beauty of it is that it is a developmental and spiritual technique that uses the natural capacity that the human consciousness inherently has. Human beings are curious by nature and it is just a matter of using that curiosity to inquire into our own experience. All that is required is a certain amount of discipline and desire to want to do it. It is actually so simple that an individual can do it on their own through journaling or silent contemplation or via engaging in a dialogue with another human being. The inquiry into the experience is then analyzed and explored even further by continuously asking open ended questions. It is about inquiring into personal thoughts, behaviours, feelings and sensations. Like most things in life it is a discipline that needs to be learnt.

What makes it complex is the language and terminology that Almaas (1998) uses. To really come to terms with this approach, the individual is required to do a tremendous amount of reading, or attend group training sessions to learn the terminology that is used in this approach. And the terminology is very important, because Almaas (1998) is very precise with the terminology that he uses. The words have very specific meanings. The problem, however, is not in the words or the description, but in the fact that often people who read the words don't really understand them due to a lack of experience. Almaas (1998) points out that the usual contention in spiritual literature that ultimate reality cannot be described is not accurate. Ultimate reality or Essence, as he refers to it, can be described. The problem, however, is that in describing Essence it does not guarantee that someone who has not experienced Essence will actually understand it. A person who has had first-hand experience of Essence will, however, easily understand what the description is referring to. Almaas describes the dilemma as follows, *"If somebody has never seen or eaten a persimmon, he will not be able to understand a description of a persimmon; but on hearing a description, he will likely envision something else, familiar from his past experience. The same holds true for descriptions of essence. The difficulty is not in describing it in words but in making sense to someone who does not have the experience. The person will be able to understand the words but will be incapable of connecting the description to his experience. He will construct something in his mind that will correspond to the description. This construction will be false because he lacks the actual experience...So when I say "existence," a person who has had the experience of existence will understand. The person who has not will either see that he does not*

*understand or will take something else in his experience to mean existence.”* (1998: 77).

As a result of this, Almaas goes to great lengths to describe what he means. For the novice this can be very overwhelming. He does however, make the point that this dilemma applies to anything and all levels of existence, not just essence. A simple example of this dilemma in the organizational context is the word strategy. Executives use the word freely, believing that when they use it everybody sees the same reality that they are referring to. The reality, however, is often very different. Enough of the concept strategy is conveyed for people to have a general or vague idea of what strategy is. The question however, is whether people are seeing the same picture. Almaas will say no, because it depends on the person's level of development and their actual experience. One just has to return to the work of Jaques and Clement (1997) to see a similar point of view. A person operating at Category B – 1 task complexity (stratum – I) will have a totally different view and experience of strategy than a person operating at Category C – 3 task complexity (stratum – VII). Hence people at different levels of development often use the same words but the experience and the world views associated with the word are literally worlds apart. To overcome this problem Almaas has to go to great lengths to develop an appropriate terminology, which can often be confusing and overwhelming for the novice. This is what makes his methodology complex and involved.

On closer inspection, however, it becomes very apparent that Almaas (1998) is actually referring to the Prehension Dimension in David Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model. His description of the actual experience corresponds to Kolb's (1984) concrete experience and the grasping of knowledge through direct apprehension. When Almaas (1998) refers to description, he is talking about Kolb's (1984) abstract conceptualization and the ability to grasp knowledge via comprehension. The beauty of this is that Almaas clearly points out the weakness of only working with the prehension dimension as a source of true knowledge. Some things are just impossible to pass on via comprehension, because it will be distorted and governed by the receiver's actual experience. Hence it is easy to understand why the Church, for example, has often executed or banished its higher-developed saints. Although they spoke the same language, they experienced totally different realities.

Be that as it may, the point is that at its most basic level Almaas (1998) is referring to Kolb's (1984) Prehension Dimension.

Fortunately, Almaas (1998) does not stop with the Prehension Dimension. He goes on to say that to be a genuine human being is to be essence. But to be essence is not only an inner experience, it is the inner and outer. Essence is the inner experience in the privacy of your heart and it is the share outer experiences with others. With a bit of reflection it becomes clear that Almaas (1998) is referring to what Kolb (1984) would call the transformation dimension of his Experiential Learning Model. In Kolb's model this is the growth dimension. When Almaas refers to the "inner and privacy of our hearts" he is talking about Kolb's (1984) concept of transformation via intention. It is the journey inwards and the activity of reflective observation. Reflective observation takes the individual inwards. The danger of course is to get trapped in this inner world where it becomes mere escapism. Hence Almaas' (1998) call that it must be completed or complemented with the "outer and shared experience with others." In so doing he is talking about Kolb's (1984) transformation via extension, the going outwards and being engaged with Active Experimentation. Interestingly enough the test of true mysticism has always been that the journey inwards is the journey outwards. Both dimensions of the journey have to be present.

It can therefore be argued that at the most elementary level Almaas's (1998) integral methodology uses inquiry as a developmental tool by making use of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model. By no means is this an attempt to simplify a very complex methodology, it is rather an attempt to arrive at a methodology that a novice can use to get started in order to mature into more complex and complicated levels of inquiry. It is argued in this model that Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model be used as an appropriate starting methodology which can at a later stage lead to more complex levels of inquiry.

## **2.7 Kolb's Experiential Learning Model**

Kolb (1984) developed his Experiential Learning Model by drawing on the work of Dewey, Lewin and Piaget's cognitive development tradition. Effectively his model is a synthesis of their work and is a four stage learning cycle that involves four adaptive

learning modes. The four adaptive learning modes are, concrete experience (the ability to involve oneself fully and openly and without bias in new experiences), reflective observation (the ability to reflect and to observe the experience from many perspectives), abstract conceptualization (the ability to create concepts and to build logically sound theories from the observations) and active experimentation (the ability to use the constructed theories to make decisions and experiment with new behaviours and thoughts). Within this model there are two distinct dimensions that represent two dialectically opposed adaptive orientations. The one dialectically opposed adaptive orientation is concrete experience versus abstract conceptualization and the second is that of active experimentation versus reflective observation. The important thing to remember is that these dimensions are independent but mutually enhancing and each makes a contribution to the learning process.

Learning requires the resolution of conflicts between these conflicting dialectical orientations. Hence by its very nature learning is a conflict and tension filled process. The first dialectical orientation, Kolb (1984) refers to the prehension dimension as it represents two different and opposing ways of experiencing the world. The first is the reliance on symbolic representations or by making use of concepts and this he calls comprehension. The other is more tangible and it makes use of the directly felt experience which he calls apprehension. There are therefore two distinct modes of grasping experience. When I walk outside on a very cold morning, for example, I will feel the cold directly. That is, I will have experienced the cold via direct apprehension. This direct apprehension I cannot pass on directly to my family or colleagues, the best I can do is to describe to them that it is cold. To do that, I need to pass on the concept that it is cold. They in turn can grasp the reality via comprehension. I have passed on my experience via a concept. I can never, however, pass on the actual experience. The problem with grasping via comprehension is that it is very much governed by my past experience and the level of my development as pointed out by Almaas (1998). My concept of coldness will be very different to an Alaskan's concept of coldness. Concepts can only pass on so much of experience, it will always be limited. That is why it is preferable to have both. Herein lies the dialectical tension, there is a difference for example, between a consultant who knows all the theory on how to run organizations (grasping via comprehension) and managers who actually have the hands

on experience (grasping via apprehension). In Kolb's (1984) view you need both. In this regard he is supported in his thinking by both Almaas and Wilber.

The active / reflective dialectic, Kolb (1984) calls the transformation dimension. It represents two opposed ways of transforming experience, either by reflecting on it, which is called intension or through "active external manipulation of the external world", which is called extension. It is this dimension that is responsible for the creation of meaning and the awareness of consciousness. Quoting Yeats he writes, *"The human soul is always moving outward into the external world and inward into itself, and this movement is double because the human soul would not be conscious were it not suspended between two contraries. The greater the contrast, the more intense the consciousness."* (Kolb, 1984:52).

In addressing the transformation dimension Kolb is honouring the call by many to integrate the inner and outer domains of human existence. Interestingly Kolb (1984) believes that traditionally the Eastern traditions have been stronger on transformation by intension while the West with its pragmatism has placed more emphasis on transformation via extension. The real power in Kolb's (1984) model is that he recognizes and honours this dialectical tension and reminds us that both are required for learning and growth to take place within the individual. Intension on its own is mere escapism or fantasy, extension on its own can be very dangerous and meaningless. The test of true mysticism has always been that the journey inward is always the journey outward. Mother Teresa of Calcutta expressed the transformation dimension very eloquently when she said, *"The fruit of silence is prayer. The fruit of prayer is faith. The fruit of faith is love. The fruit of love is service. The fruit of service is peace"* (Vardey, 1995: 39). The transformation dimension is an integrated whole.

According to Kolb (1984) learning happens as a result of the transaction between these four adaptive modes and the way in which the dialectical tension gets resolved. As a result there are four forms of knowledge as presented in Figure 2.4. (Those familiar with Kolb's model will realize that the order has been altered. Instead of moving from left to right around the cycle, the order has been reversed from right to left. The reason for this adaptation will be made clear in section 2.6.)

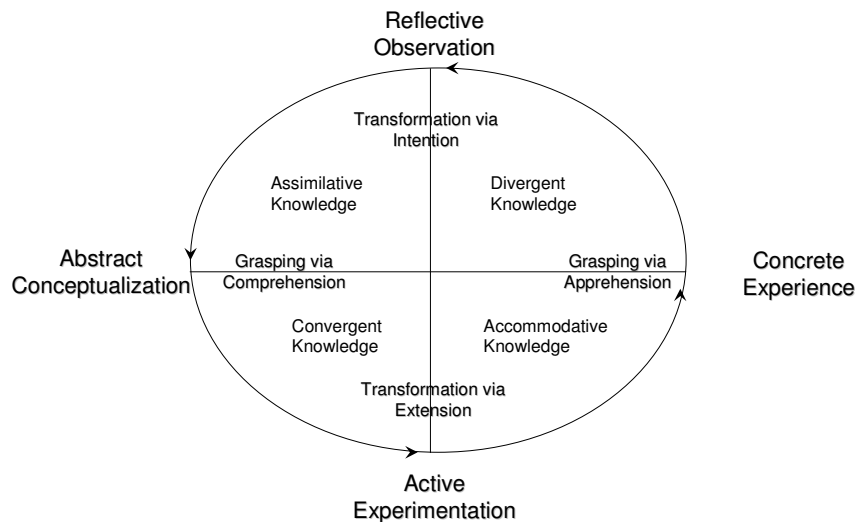


Figure 2.4. Kolb's Experiential Learning Model.

Source: Adapted from Kolb (1984: 42)

Divergent knowledge is the result of grasping experience via apprehension and transforming it via intention. Experience grasped via comprehension and transformed via intention results in assimilative knowledge. Convergent knowledge is as a result of experience being grasped via comprehension and transformed through extension. When experience is grasped via apprehension and transformed via extension the resulting knowledge is accommodative. Kolb's (1984) point is that grasping knowledge is not sufficient for learning. For learning to take place it has to be acted on, in other words the grasping has to be transformed either via intension or extension. At the same time transformation on its own is also meaningless. There has to be something, an experience or concept, which has to be transformed. Kolb (1984) points out that all adults are capable of using all four modes. The learning processes is not however identical for all human beings. This could be due to "*physiological structures that govern learning.*" As a result individuals tend to emphasize some adaptive orientations over others. In other words, individuals tend to use some orientations more than others. It is not that they cannot use all four, they just prefer



certain orientations more than others. This can lead to people getting stuck in those orientations. Kolb's (1984) Learning Style Inventory (LSI) was developed to identify an individual's preferred learning style.

### **2.7.1 The Learning Styles Inventory (LSI)**

The LSI is a self-description questionnaire that measures an individual's relative emphasis on each of the four modes. On the prehension dimension it measures the extent to which an individual emphasizes abstraction over being concrete (AC – CE). The transformation dimension measures the extent to which an individual emphasizes action over reflection (AE – RO). The four basic learning modes are:

- An orientation toward concrete experience focuses on immediate experience. The individual tends to get personally involved and uses feelings more than thinking. There is a concern for the complexity involved with reality as opposed to working with theories and generalizations. The approach to problem resolution is more intuitive and “artistic” as opposed to scientific and systematic. These are usually people orientated individuals who relate well to other people. These people tend to have an open-minded approach to life and as a result they tend to function well in unstructured situations.
- An orientation toward reflective observation focuses on the understanding and meaning of ideas. They tend to try and understand the meaning of ideas by observing and impartially commenting on them. The emphasis is on understanding how things happen as opposed to what works. These people tend to be good at seeing the implications of ideas and at looking at things from many different perspectives. They tend to value impartiality and patience; the kind of people that drive action orientated business executives mad.
- An orientation towards abstract conceptualization focuses on concepts and ideas. Here the emphasis is on thinking as opposed to feeling. This is a more scientific orientation that is more logical and concerned with building general theories. It is the opposite of the artistic, intuitive approach. These people tend to be good at quantitative analysis, systematic planning and the manipulation of abstract symbols. They tend to be disciplined when it comes to analyzing ideas.

- An active experimentation orientation focuses on changing situations and influencing people. Here the emphasis is on practical application and a pragmatic concern for what works. Action is valued above observation and these people enjoy getting things done. Because they love to see results they are willing to take risks and to try and influence the environment in which they find themselves.

Based on research and clinical observation of the LSI scores, Kolb (1984) developed descriptions of the characteristics of the four learning styles. The four descriptions are:

- The convergent learning style. Here an individual prefers to employ abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. This approach is strong at decision making, the practical application of ideas and problem solving. This learning style solves problems through hypothetical-deductive reasoning. People who prefer this style of learning prefer to deal with technical tasks and problems. Social and interpersonal issues tend to be avoided.
- The divergent learning style. Here the individual prefers to utilize concrete experience and reflective observation. These people tend to like working with people and are more feeling-orientated and tend to be imaginative. They love to look at things from many perspectives and tend towards observation rather than action. They are good at brainstorming because of their ability to generate alternative ideas and to think of their implications.
- The assimilation learning style. This style draws on abstract conceptualization and reflective observation. Individuals who prefer this style tend to have an ability to create theoretical models, synthesizing disparate observations into meaningful explanations and they use inductive reasoning. The interest is more on ideas and abstract concepts than on people. Theories are valued more for their precision and logic than for their practical value.
- The accommodative learning style. Here concrete experience and active experimentation are employed as the preferred learning abilities. It is action orientated and excels at getting things done, completing tasks and getting involved with new experiences. This style is accommodative because it is best suited for those situations where an individual must adapt to the changing circumstances. These individuals will tend to discard plans or theories when they do not suit the facts. Problems are solved in an intuitive trial-and-error manner. These people

tend to rely more on other people for information than their own analytical ability. Although they are comfortable with people they can be seen as pushy and impatient.

Again it must be emphasized that these are preferred learning styles. The ideal is for an individual to move through all four learning styles to optimize learning and growth. The problem, as was mentioned previously, is that individuals tend to get stuck or concentrate on one of the four learning abilities and in so doing limit their own learning and development. Kolb (1984) found that the following factors can affect or shape individuals preferred learning styles which could lead to them concentrating on a preferred learning style:

- **Personality Type.** Quoting research done by Margerson and Lewis on 220 M.B.A. students, Kolb (1984) argues that there is a strong relationship between learning styles and the Jungian personality types. The accommodating learning style is associated with the sensing type, the assimilative learning style with the intuitive type, the divergent learning style with the feeling personality type and the convergent learning style with the thinking personality types.
- **Educational Specialization.** Given that we are taught how to learn it can be expected that early educational experiences shape learning styles. The longer an individual spends in the educational system the more specialized the learning becomes. So for example, postgraduate studies are more specialized than graduate studies, which in turn are more specialized than high school. Hence Kolb (1984) found that some of the differences in the learning orientations of managers can be explained by their early educational specializations in university.
- **Evidence seems to suggest that undergraduate training is a major factor in the development of learning styles.** The open question is whether the field shapes the learning style or whether individuals choose fields that suit their learning style. Kolb (1984) is of the opinion that both factors are at play. Those individuals choose a field based on their preferred learning style, which is then reinforced by the field or the discipline.
- **Professional Career.** The choice of a professional career not only exposes an individual to a specialized learning environment, it furthermore involves adopting a common set of values and beliefs about professional behaviour that is shared by

peers who share a certain professional mentality. A learning style is shaped through habits acquired in professional training and normative pressure. Kolb (1984) found that certain learning style orientations characterized certain professions. Social workers for example, tended towards the divergent learning style, while the converger learning style was associated with accountants, engineers and the medical doctors. Professional managers tended to be between the converger and assimilator learning styles.

- **Current Job Role.** A person's adaptive orientation tends to be shaped by current job demands and pressure. An accommodative learning style is required by executives who have to make decisions in uncertain circumstances while at the same time having a strong orientation towards task delivery. Jobs that involve working with people, where personal relationships are critical demand a divergent learning style. Assimilative learning is called for where the work is centred on data gathering, analyses and conceptual modelling. Technical jobs like engineering and production require a convergent learning style.
- **Adaptive Competencies.** According to Kolb (1984) the specific task or the problem that an individual is currently working on is the most specific force that shapes learning styles. Each task or job requires a specific set of skills. The effective matching of task demands and personal skills is what Kolb (1984) calls "adaptive competence." Hence the need to test for competencies as opposed to generalized aptitudes that are too generalized to relate to specific tasks for a given job. The aim is to identify adaptive competencies that lead to congruence between personal skills and task demands. Kolb (1984) found that adaptive competencies did relate to learning styles. The divergent learning style is associated with valuing skills like, being sensitive to people's feelings, imagining implications of ambiguous situations, gathering information, listening with an open mind and being sensitive to values. Acting skills like committing yourself to objective, seeking and exploiting opportunities, being personally involved, dealing with people and influencing and leading others are associated with the accommodator learning style. The assimilator learning style is related to thinking skills which include; organizing information, analysing quantitative data, testing theories and ideas, building conceptual models and designing experiments. Decision skills such as creating new ways of thinking and doing, making decisions, setting goals,

experimenting with new ideas and choosing the best solutions are related to the converger learning style. Hence it can be concluded that tasks requiring certain skills will influence the preferred learning style.

### **2.7.2 Experiential learning and development**

Unlike the classical Piagetians who believe that learning is a subordinate process that is not actively involved in human development, Kolb (1984) believes that learning is the process through which development occurs. *“Without denying the reality of biological maturation and developmental achievements (that is, enduring cognitive structures that organize thought and action), the experiential learning theory of development focuses on the transaction between internal characteristics and external circumstances, between personal knowledge and social knowledge. It is the process of learning from experience that shapes and actualizes developmental potentialities. This learning is a social process; and thus, the course of individual development is shaped by the cultural system of social knowledge...Through experiences of imitation and communication with others and interaction with the physical environment, internal development potentialities are enacted and practiced until they are internalized as an independent development achievement. Thus, learning becomes the vehicle of human development via interactions between individuals with their biological potentialities and the society with its symbols, tools, and other cultural artifacts”* (Kolb, 1984:133).

The first thing that becomes very apparent is that Kolb's (1984) language and concepts are very similar to that of Wilber's. He talks about the inner and outer world, personal knowledge and social knowledge. In so doing he is describing Wilber's (1995) four quadrant model. The last sentence of the quote contains all four quadrants. “Thus, learning becomes the vehicle of human development via interactions between individuals (Upper-Left quadrant) with their biological potentialities (Upper-Right quadrant) and the society with its symbols (Lower-Left quadrant), tools, and other cultural artifacts (Lower-Right quadrant).” The similarities between Kolb (1984) and Wilber (1995) do not end there. They share a very similar view of human development. Kolb's (1984) development model can be summarized in Figure 2.5.

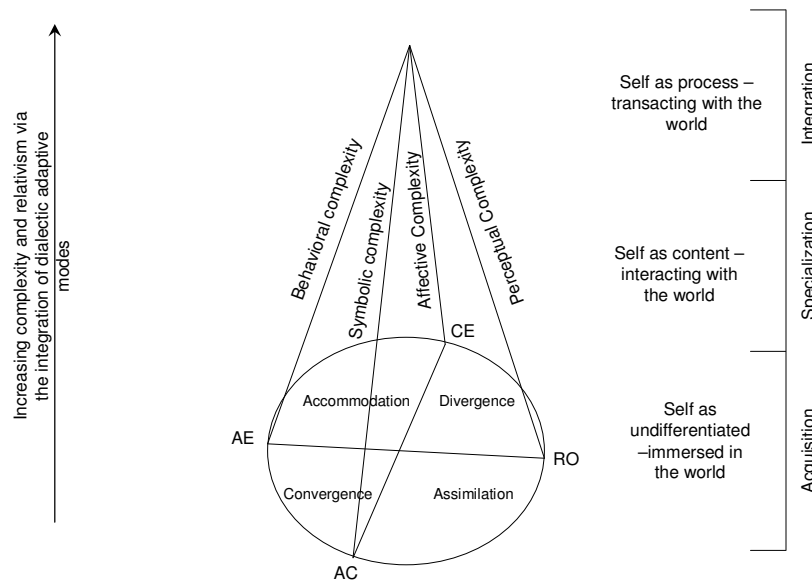


Figure 2.5. The Experiential Learning Theory of Growth and Development

Source: Kolb (1984: 141)

Like Wilber (1995), Kolb (1984) sees development as a dialectical process, that requires a confrontation and resolution of the dialectical conflicts and it is marked by increased differentiation and integration. In this regard, his hierarchical integration is the same as Wilber's (1995) fifth principal, namely; that an emergent holon transcends but includes its predecessor(s). Each emerging new holon includes the preceding holons and then adds its own defining patterns to it. In each case it preserves the previous holons but it negates their partiality. Kolb (1984) says exactly the same thing in that each developmental stage is characterized by the acquisition of a higher-level of consciousness that precedes the stage before it. Yet at the same time the previous or earlier levels of consciousness remain intact. So in Kolb's (1984) model, an adult can display all three levels of consciousness, namely; registrative, interpretative and integrative. Both therefore believe in a developmental hierarchy which evolves towards higher and higher levels of complexity. Furthermore, they both believe that each successive stage of development builds on its predecessor, by adding something new, while at the same time preserving the previous stage. Although Kolb (1984) does not say it, from his work it is clear that he would not support the popular

idea of trying to do away with hierarchies. Development hierarchies are inherent in Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Theory.

Experiential Learning Theory believes that there are four interrelated developmental dimensions, namely; perceptual complexity, affective complexity, behavioural complexity and symbolic complexity as represented in Figure 2.8. The important thing is that although these dimensions are interrelated, they can develop separately / independently of each other or at various rates / speeds. Hence Kolb (1984) differs from Piaget in that he sees individuality not only being manifested in the stage of development, but also in the personal learning style that the person adopts. This is very similar to Wilber's idea of separate and independent development lines, as represented in Figure 2.5. Hence both Wilber (1995) and Kolb (1984) break away from the pure linearity of the Piagetian approach, in that they see development as being multilinear. Yet both agree that the more integrated the individual becomes the more the various lines of development become integrated or converge.

### **2.7.3 Kolb's developmental stages**

Kolb (1984) believed that the human development process can be divided into three broad developmental stages namely, acquisition, specialization and integration. Acquisition extends from birth to adolescence and it is the stage where the basic learning abilities and cognitive structures are acquired. At the beginning the self is experienced as undifferentiated and immersed in the environment. As the child develops through the acquisition phase there is a gradual development of an internalized structure that allows the self to distinguish and separate itself from the surrounding environment. It is at this stage that the discrimination between internal and external stimuli are developed which matures into the *"delineation of the boundaries of selfhood."*

The specialization phase extends through formal education and/or career training into early adulthood. Given their culture, education and socialization, the individual becomes more specialized to adapt and master their careers. It is at this stage that the individual will work very intensely with the transformative dimension for the first time, the dynamic tension between internal personal dynamic and external social

forces and expectations. Kolb (1984) points out that during this phase there is a closer and closer match between self characteristics and environmental demands. And there are two ways in which this happens, social pressure forces the person to fit in, and people tend to select environments that are consistent with their characteristics. At this stage the self is defined in terms of “content” – professional skills, achievements and past experiences, both good and bad. The sense of self is based on the rewards and recognition received for doing well in a chosen life task. The primary mode of interacting with the world is through interaction. The individual acts on the world and the world acts on him or her in return through the rewards it gives. Kolb (1984) does point out that although this interaction is bi-directional neither is fundamentally changed by the other. This stage brings about social security and achievement.

The Integration phase is ushered in with the existential crises, the conflict between personal fulfilment and meaning versus social demands and expectations. The individual strives more to influence than to be influenced by the environment. There is an exploration of aspects of the personality that was suppressed during the specialization phase. Hence, the concept of the self moves from self as “content”, to the self as process. Sadly, this is where Kolb (1984) stops with the stages of development, at the same level that Jaques and Clement (1994) do. Both stop their thinking on human development at the highest level of rational development, the existential level.

## **2.8 Integrating Wilber and Kolb’s models to create the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.**

In Wilber’s (1995) model, the highest level of rational development is referred to as Vision-Logic, and is seen as the transition point into the transpersonal bands. As can be seen from Table 2.1 Wilber (1995) and Kolb (1984) are in complete agreement on the symbolic complexity via comprehension for the personal bands of development. In short, they are saying the same thing. If any criticism can be levelled at Kolb, it could be that he has done himself a total injustice by stopping at the integrative level. This could be due to the fact that he was writing for a mainly “pragmatic” Western audience that is less open to the transpersonal levels of development. Be that as it



may, it is clear that in terms of human development and how it happens, Wilber (1995) and Kolb (1984) seem to be in agreement. The only difference is that Wilber's (1995) model is more integral than Kolb's (1984) model, in that the former does not stop at the personal levels of development but allows for the transpersonal levels of human development.

<b>Wilber's Stages</b>	<b>Wilber's symbolic complexity via comprehension</b>	<b>Kolb Stage's</b>	<b>Kolb's symbolic complexity via comprehension</b>
10. Causal	Experience of Emptiness		
9. Subtle	Experience of Archetypes		
8. Vision-logic	Visionary thought	Integration	Attaching concrete meanings to symbol systems and finding and solving meaningful problems
7. Formal-reflexive	Abstract thought	Specialization	Formal hypothetic-deductive reasoning
6. Rule/role-linking	Concrete thought	Specialization	Concrete symbolic operations
5. Rep-thinking	Thinking in symbols and concepts	Acquisition	Object constancy; "ikonic" thought
4. Phantasmic	Thinking in simple images	Acquisition	Recognizing enactive thought
3. Emotional-sexual	Life force	Acquisition	Recognizing enactive thought
2. Sensoriperceptual	Sensation and perception	Acquisition	Recognizing enactive thought
1. Physical	The physical organism	Acquisition	

Table 2.1. Wilber versus Kolb's Stages

Source: Adapted from Visser (2003:123); Kolb (1984:152)

Given that Wilber's (1995) integrative model caters for more developmental stages and that his theory as a whole is covered in more depth than Kolb's (1984), it is argued that the former's model provides a more comprehensive framework for integrated growth

and development. It is more holistic than Kolb's (1984) model and hence it should be used as the Meta theory for human growth and development in an integrated coaching model. However, Wilber's (1995) Integral model is weak in terms of the praxis for human development and it is here that Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model is far superior. Kolb's (1984) model provides a practical experiential way to learn and grow in an integrated way. In order to develop an Integral Experiential Coaching Model it is suggested that the two models be integrated to form a higher synthesis as represented in Figure 2.6.

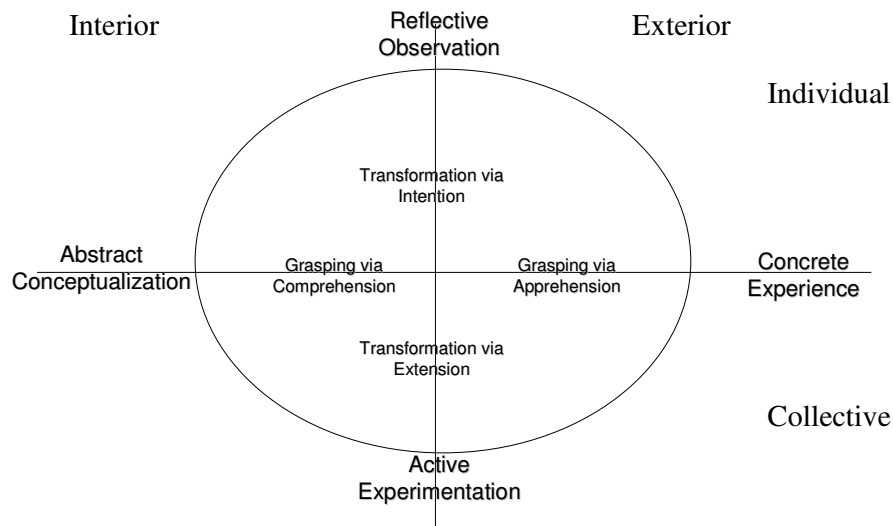


Figure 2.6. Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.

Source: Adapted form Wilber (1996: 71); Kolb (1984:42)

Wilber's (1995) model provides the meta framework for integrated growth and development; while Kolb's (1984) model provides a practical experiential way to learn and grow in an integrated way. Figure 2.6 is an oversimplified presentation of two very complex models, yet it provides a simple framework to explain the synthesis of the two models. An individual will generally experience something concrete in the context of the collective, unless the individual lives in complete isolation. To make sense of that experience the individual needs to make use of the intension dimension, move inwards and reflect on the experience. Having reflected on it, the individual

starts to develop some theory or concept about the experience. Abstract conceptualization, however, is not something that belongs purely to the individual; it is influenced by the culture or system in which the individual finds him or herself. Kolb (1984) conceptualizes experiential learning as a developmental process that is the product of both personal and social knowledge. The individual's state of development flows from the transaction of the individual's personal experience and the particular system of social knowledge with which they interact. Here Kolb (1984) disagrees with Piaget who sees it purely as an individual issue.

Having developed a theory, the individual then needs to engage the extension dimension and actively experiment within the collective environment. The beauty of Kolb's (1984) model is that it is context and content independent. The same methodology can be used to facilitate the learning of meditation, personal fitness training, designing organizational processes and structures or how to manage people. Done correctly and in a disciplined way, experiential learning will automatically move the individual through all four quadrants and develop all four learning capabilities that are a prerequisite for human growth and development. And the more developed the person becomes, the more integrative the experiential learning experience becomes as illustrated in Figure 2.5, thereby facilitating personal growth, development and the transformation of consciousness.

Thus the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model proposes that coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher's Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber's Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb's Experiential Learning model as the developmental tool.

## 2.9 Phenomenology

The other interesting aspect of Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model is how well it integrates with Phenomenology. Ernesto Spinelli (1998) points out that Edmund Husserl (1859 – 1938) is credited with developing an approach of investigation known as the phenomenological method. Husserl wanted to develop the science of phenomena, a science that could clarify how objects are experienced and presented to consciousness. The task was to explore the subjective experience of individuals. The aim, as Spinelli (1998) points out was *"to expose how our consciousness imposes itself upon, and obscures, 'pure' reality."* In so doing the individual becomes more aware and is able to bracket (or set aside) conscious experience so that a more adequate approximation of reality can arise. Central to phenomenology is the idea of imposing meaning on the world. Phenomenology argues that things exist in the way that they exist because of the meaning that each individual assigns to them. *"Simply stated, this conclusion argues that true reality is, and will forever remain, both unknown and unknowable to us. Instead, that which we term reality, that is, that which is experienced by us as being reality, is inextricably linked to our mental processes in general, and in particular, to our in-built, innate capacity to construct meaning."* (Spinelli, 1998: 2).

Consequently our reality is a phenomenological reality that is open to a multiplicity of interpretations. What many people take to be objective reality, based on objective laws or truths, are actually judgments that are influenced by a consensus viewpoint. This consensus viewpoint is one agreed upon by a whole culture or a group of individuals or professionals, it is an interpretation. It is an interpretation that works and has meaning for the group who has constructed that meaning. Kolb (1984) refers to this phenomena as the selectivist paradigm, and it is this higher level of integrated learning which uses the act of purpose (meaning) to integrate the psychological world (feeling, thought, desire) with the physical world (the individual and world as physical / chemical substances). Quoting Von Glasersfeld, concerning the selectivist paradigm, Kolb (1984) makes the point that theories and constructs survive for as long as "they serve the purposes to which we put them." The theory, knowledge or construct is viable because it works for us, not because it is any sense a replica or picture of reality. This however, does not imply that validity is unique because there could be a host of

other constructs that could be as viable as the one that was constructed. Phenomenology holds that whatever that meaning is, it cannot be concluded that it is a true or correct reflection of reality. This is a view that is held by Jaques and Clement (1997) as well.

### **2.9.1 Subjective versus Objective Reality**

Does this mean that reality is a purely subjective process, nothing more than mere mental constructs? Not at all. Kolb (1984) speaks about the act of purpose integrating both the psychological (subjective) and physical (objective) world. The problem, as phenomenologists point out, is that we never only perceive the objective world or mental phenomena; we experience the interaction of the two. All agree that there is a physical reality which remains free of our consciousness, which we have labelled objective reality. It is our interpretation of that objective reality that can be questioned. Moustakas sums up the dilemma as follows, *“The phenomenological Epoche does not eliminate everything, does not deny the reality of everything, does not doubt everything – only the natural attitude, the biases of everyday knowledge, as a basis for truth and reality. What is doubted are the scientific “facts,” the knowing of things in advance, from an external base rather than from internal reflection and meaning”* (1994:85).

These interpretations or facts, as were mentioned previously, are influenced by a whole culture or a group of individuals or professionals, it is a paradigm which has been created and in which we operate. These interpretations and paradigms are therefore open to change, and from history we know that they do change over time.

### **2.9.2 Phenomenology’s Fundamental Issues**

Spinelli (1998) mentions that Husserl focused on two issues in an attempt to examine how we construct our reality. The first is the notion of intentionality as the basis of mental experiences, and the second is the noematic and noetic foci of intentionality which are the shapers of experience.

Intentionality is the basis of all meaning based constructs of the world. *“As it is employed by phenomenologists, intentionality is the term used to describe the*

*fundamental action of the mind reaching out to the stimuli which make up the real world in order to translate them into the realm of meaningful experience. In other words, intentionality refers to the first, most basic interpretative mental act – that of ‘translating’ the unknown raw stimuli of the real world, which our senses have responded to, into an object-based (or ‘thing’ – based) reality. Franz Brenato first coined the term ‘intentionality’ in order to clarify his assertion that a real physical world exists outside our consciousness and that, as such, all consciousness is always directed towards the real world in order to interpret it in a meaningful manner”* (Spinelli, 1998: 11). Human consciousness is therefore always aware of some thing, the mind is directed towards some entity whether the entity exists or not. The object can be real or imaginary, it can be a tree or I can be worried. In the case of the latter I am still worried about some thing. According to phenomenologists it would appear that human beings are programmed to interpret an object or thing-based world. Thus Moustakas (1994) asserts that intentionality refers to the internal experience of being conscious of something, the act of consciousness and the object of consciousness are intentionally related. The senses respond to unknown stimuli from the physical world which undergoes a translation or interpretation that leads the individual to respond to the stimuli as if they are objects or things. The meaning that the individual ascribes to the object or thing is, however, determined by various socio-culture influences that have informed the individuals’ mental framework. Hence the knowledge that the individual has of the external world is not as a result of his or her direct access to external reality. That knowledge has undergone a number of complex interpretations that have been influenced by past experience, socio-cultural influences and the level or stage of development. For this reason it is possible for two individuals to have exactly the same experience, but to experience and interpret it differently. Spinelli (1998) argues that because of the act of intentionality, “ultimate reality” can never be known. As a result, our interpretations of the world and the meaning we ascribe to it are not unique or fixed. Through the act of intentionality we constantly interpret and assign meaning to our world.

In so doing, the phenomenological concept of intentionality is the same or very similar to Kolb’s (1984) transformational dimension of experiential learning. Meaning is created through the synergetic role of the dual transformation processes of intention and extension. *“What I propose here is that the transformation processes of intention*

*and extension can be applied to our concrete apprehensions of the world as well as to our symbolic comprehensions. We learn the meaning of our concrete immediate experience by internally reflecting on their presymbolic impact on our feelings, and/or by acting on our apprehended experience and thus extending it...Learning, the creation of knowledge and meaning, occurs through the active extension and grounding of ideas and experiences in the external world and through internal reflection about the attributes of these experiences and ideas” (Kolb, 1984:52).*

Every act of intentionality does, however, have a noematic and noetic focus which are the shapers of experience. The thing that is being experienced is the noema or noematic correlate and is the object (the what) towards which we direct our focus. The mode of the experience is the noesis or noetic correlate, it is the how we experience an object. As an example, assume two individuals from two different race groups are listening to a diversity lecture. At the end of the lecture the one totally agrees with what has been said, while the other is furious. In Kolb’s (1984) terms both have grasped the lecture via direct apprehension, they had the same experience. The noematic focus is made up of the content of whatever is being focused on or being experienced, in this case the content and arguments presented in the lecture. The noematic focus is the same as Kolb’s (1984) concept of grasping via direct apprehension. Yet, although they experienced the same lecture, their experience of the lecture was different. This is due to the noetic focus, which contains the referential elements of the individual and deals with the various cognitive and affective biases that add more elements of meaning to the experience. The noetic focus corresponds to Kolb’s (1984) concept of grasping via comprehension. Kolb (1984) sees this as a secondary and arbitrary way of knowing. Comprehension is the way in which we introduce order into an “unpredictable flow of apprehended sensations.” Yet by doing that as Kolb (1984) points out, we distort and forever change the flow. In theory it would appear that we can distinguish between the noetic and noematic focus, in practice however, the two are not distinct from each other. When it comes to experience we evoke both foci, the events contained in the experience (noema) and the way we experienced it (noesis). Hence we see that the noema and noesis foci of phenomenology are the same as Kolb’s (1984) prehension dimension, while the concept of intentionality is the same as Kolb’s (1984) transformation dimension.

### 2.9.3 The Phenomenological method

Spinelli (1998) points out that the concept of intentionality, and its noematic and noetic foci, enabled Husserl to develop the phenomenological methodology to help clarify the interpretational factors contained in each experience. The aim of the phenomenological method is to raise an awareness of how consciousness imposes itself and obscures 'pure' reality. It is therefore concerned with wholeness in that it examines experience from many sides, angles and perspectives until an integrated vision of the essence of the phenomena is achieved. In this methodology subject and object are integrated. *"Phenomenology is rooted in questions that give a direction and focus to meaning, and in themes that sustain inquiry, awaken further interest and concern, and account for our passionate involvement with whatever is being experienced. In a phenomenological investigation the researcher has a personal interest in whatever she or he seeks to know; the researcher is intimately connected with the phenomenon. The puzzlement is autographical, making memory and history essential dimensions of discovery, in the present and extensions into the future"*(Moustakas, 1994:59).

In Wilber's (1995) terms, the methodology deals with the inner (noesis) and external (noema) quadrants, as well as dealing with the individual within the context of the communal, covering both the inner and outer quadrants.

In this methodology as Moustakas (1994) points out, phenomenology tries to seek meaning and the essence of an experience by reflecting on it. This in turn leads to ideas, concepts, understanding and judgments. This methodology therefore uses personal experience, subjective thinking, intuition, reflection and judgment as primary evidence for scientific investigation. The phenomenological methodology therefore contains all the elements of the experiential learning processes, namely; concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization and active experimentation. In addition to facilitating learning and growth, experiential learning at a more mature level turns out to be a powerful scientific investigation methodology as well.



The important thing to remember, however, is that it is always individual experiential learning within a communal or collective context. It is an intersubjective experience, since the world is a community of persons. Moustakas (1994) points out that it is through conversations and dialogues with other people that the individual continuously corrects their interpretation of reality. Other people help us to validate our experiences through the interchange of perceptions, judgments, feelings and ideas. Schumacher (1978) emphasizes the same point when he refers to the Four Fields of Knowledge, namely; I-inner, the world (you)-inner, I-outer and the world (you)-outer. He mentions that any individual only has direct access to the I-inner and the world (you)-outer fields of knowledge. An individual can feel what he or she is feeling and can directly see what the other looks like. But what it feels like to be the other and what the individual looks like in the eyes of the other cannot be known directly. To gain access to those fields of knowledge, the individual needs intersubjective dialogue and conversations to help validate their reality.

Moustakas's (1994) phenomenological research method is known as Transcendental Phenomenology, it is called, *"...phenomenology' because it utilizes only the data that is available for consciousness – the appearance of objects. It is considered 'transcendental' because it adheres to what can be discovered through reflection on subjective acts and their objective correlates"* (Moustakas, 1994:45). It is transcendental because it helps to uncover the ego for which everything has meaning. It is phenomenological because it transforms the world into mere phenomena. The methodology process consists of four steps namely; Epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, and synthesis.

#### **2.9.4 The Epoche Process**

Epoche is a Greek word which means to abstain, stay away from or to refrain from judgment. In our day to day lives we tend to hold knowledge judgmentally, that is we are biased due to our expectations and assumptions. The Epoche requires that we bracket as far as possible our biases, understandings, knowing and assumptions and look at things in a new and fresh way. As Moustakas says, we need to revisit our experiences, *"...from the vantage point of a pure or transcendental ego."* (1994:33). This does of course assume that the individual has developed a healthy and mature ego

that can be transcended. An underdeveloped ego will not be able to do this. The Epoche does therefore assume and call for a certain level of ego maturity. In so doing, the individual is able to bracket the ordinary thought processes and look at experience from a fresh perspective. The Epoche urges the individual to impose an openness on to their immediate experience. In so doing, subsequent conclusions drawn about the experience (whatever it may be) would be based more on the immediate experience than upon prior expectations and assumptions. The aim is to see and experience the “experience” in a completely open manner. It is a way of seeing and experiencing before any form of reflection, judgments or the reaching of conclusions happens. Of critical importance is that in the Epoche no position is taken, everything is of equal value. Nothing is determined in advance. Everything is experienced and valued for what it is; it is a fresh way of perceiving and experiencing. This is not an easy state to achieve, and as was mentioned previously it assumes and calls for a certain level of ego maturity. As Moustakas points out, *“The challenge is to silence the directing voices and sounds, internally and externally, to remove from myself the manipulating or predisposing influences and to become completely and solely attuned to just what appears, to encounter the phenomena, as such, with a pure state of mind”* (1994:88).

The Epoche process therefore requires sustained attention, presence, discipline and concentration. Moustakas (1994) refers to the process as a form of reflective-meditation. In this process the individual allows prejudices, preconceptions and prejudgments to arise in consciousness and leave freely. The aim is to be as receptive to these phenomena as to the unbiased looking and seeing. Those familiar with the work of De Mello (1990) will immediately recognize that it is all about “awareness”, just learning to be aware of the phenomena and then to let them go. Eventually the essence of the experience is seen for what it is. It is impossible to totally bracket everything, but the aim is to become more aware and disciplined in the process in order to experience life and the phenomena in a less biased way. With practice the individual will learn to become more open to their own experience, and be more aware of how their biases predetermine and influence their reality.

The Epoche process corresponds very well with Kolb’s (1984) concept of concrete experience. For a person to learn from concrete experience they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences. The aim, like

the Epoche process, is to be open to experience and to move beyond or to transcend personal and social biases. The way of experiencing via the Epoche process is the same as Kolb's (1984) grasping via apprehension. Like the phenomenologists, Kolb (1984) is very aware of how using words to put the experience into a concept can take something away from the direct experience. *"What you see, hear, and feel around you are those sensations, colors, textures, and sounds, that are so basic and reliable that we call them reality. The continuous feel of your chair as it firmly supports your body, the smooth texture of the book and its pages, the muted mixture of sounds surrounding you – all these things and many others you know instantaneously without need for rational inquiry or analytical confirmation. They are simply there, grasped through a mode of knowing called apprehension. Yet to describe these perceptions faithfully in words, as I have attempted here, is somewhat difficult. It is almost as though the words are vessels dipped in the sea of sensations we experience as reality, vessels that hold and give form to those sensations contained, while sensations left behind fade from awareness. The concept "chair," for example, probably describes where you are sitting...It is a convenient way to summarize a whole series of sensations you are having right now, although it tends to actively discourage attention to parts of that experience other than those associated with "chairness" (Kolb, 1984:43).*

Both concrete experience and the Epoche process therefore encourage the individual to continuously open themselves in a fresh, non biased way to their own experience, free of preconceptions and prejudgments.

### **2.9.5 Phenomenological reduction**

Phenomenological reduction is a process of pre reflection, reflection and reduction with the aim of explicating the phenomenon's essential nature. The task is to derive a textural description of what the individual experiences in terms of the external object and the internal act of consciousness, describing the relationship between the phenomena and the self. The rule is to describe and not to explain. The problem with explaining is that it tries to make sense of the experience in terms of a hypothesis or theory. Spinelli (1998) gives the example of a hypochondriac who has failed to apply the rule of description. Instead of describing the somatic experience in concrete terms, the individual jumps to abstract, disease model explanations. In so doing the individual

provokes levels of anxiety that just reinforce the debilitating situation. Descriptions are derived from the immediate sensory-based experience. Explanations try to make sense of experience within the boundaries of a hypothesis or theory. The aim is to reflect, reflect again and then to describe the experience in textural qualities, varying intensities, special qualities and time references. The experiencing person therefore turns inward in reflection and describes whatever shines forth in consciousness. Whatever stands out and is meaningful for the individual is explored and reflected on. Individual memories, judgments, perceptions and reflections are reflected on and described as they are integral to the process. The process allows the individual to return to the self, in that the world is experienced from the vantage point of self-reflection, self-awareness and self-knowledge. The more the individual reflects the more exact the phenomena becomes.

Phenomenological reduction is about observing and describing. In this regard we can see that phenomenological reduction is the same as Kolb's (1984) reflective observation. *"An orientation towards reflective observation focuses on understanding the meaning of ideas and situations by carefully observing and impartially describing them. It emphasizes understanding as opposed to practical application; a concern with what is true or how things happen as opposed to what will work; an emphasis on reflection as opposed to action...They are good at looking at things from different perspectives and appreciating different points of view. They like to rely on their own thoughts and feelings to form opinions"* (Kolb, 1984: 68).

He goes on to mention how we learn the meaning of immediate concrete experience by reflecting on their "presymbolic impact" on feelings. The issue is that both methodologies call for inner reflection that tries to describe the experience rather than explaining it.

More importantly, reflection is never-ending. Although the individual might reach a point where they consciously stop the reflective process, the possibility for reflection and discovery is unlimited. In phenomenological reduction this is known as horizontalization. No matter how many times the individual reconsiders or reflects on the experience, the experience can never be exhausted because horizons are unlimited. Even the final textural description, although completed in a point of time, remains

open to further reflection. Another requirement of horizontalization is that all statements are treated as equal and that the applying of hierarchies of significance should be avoided. By avoiding hierarchical assumptions, the individual is in a better position to examine the experience with less prejudice.

#### **2.9.6 Imaginative variation**

Through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, different perspective and points of views, the individual tries to derive a structural description of the experience and the underlying factors that account for what is being experienced. The aim is to understand the “how” that brought about the “what” of the experience. The question that needs to be explored is how did the experience come to be what it is? By using the textural descriptions, the aim is to derive structural essences of the experience and how it came about. It creates a picture of the conditions that give rise to the experience and connect with it. According to Moustakas (1994), imaginative Variation consists of four steps, namely;

- Continuously looking for varying and different structural meanings that underlie the textural meanings;
- Becoming aware of and recognizing the underlying themes that have brought about the phenomena;
- Become aware of the universal structures that give impetus to the thoughts and feelings with reference to the phenomena. Consider things like time, space, causality, relation to self and others and bodily concerns;
- *“Searching for exemplifications that vividly illustrate the invariant structural themes that facilitate the development of a structural description of the phenomenon” (1994:99).*

In essence it can be said that imaginative variation is an attempt to develop an understanding or “theory” about how the experience came about. Thus it is very similar, if not the same as Kolb’s (1984) abstract conceptualization where the individual is able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories.

### **2.9.7 Synthesis of meaning and essences**

The final step in the methodology is the integration and synthesis of the textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the experience as a whole. The important thing to remember is that the textural-structural synthesis represents the essence of the experience from the point of view of an individual researcher at a definite point in time and place, and as such it is open to further exploration. The essence of any experience is never totally exhausted. Hence this research methodology is often used for hypothesis generating research as opposed to hypothesis testing research. For this reason it can be seen as a form of active experimentation. The findings have to be taken further and researched further. It generates a hypothesis that needs to be researched and tested empirically. The hypothesis has to be applied and tested, it is an ongoing experiment.

### **2.10 Integrating Transcendental Phenomenology with the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.**

Based on the above logic it can be argued that Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning model integrates very well with Moustakas' (1994) Transcendental Phenomenological research methodology. It can therefore be argued that the latter is just a higher or more mature form of learning than the former. In other words, Experiential Learning matures into Transcendental Phenomenology. Both can therefore be used as integral developmental methodologies. Transcendental Phenomenology is therefore easily integrated with the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model as represented in Figure 2.7.

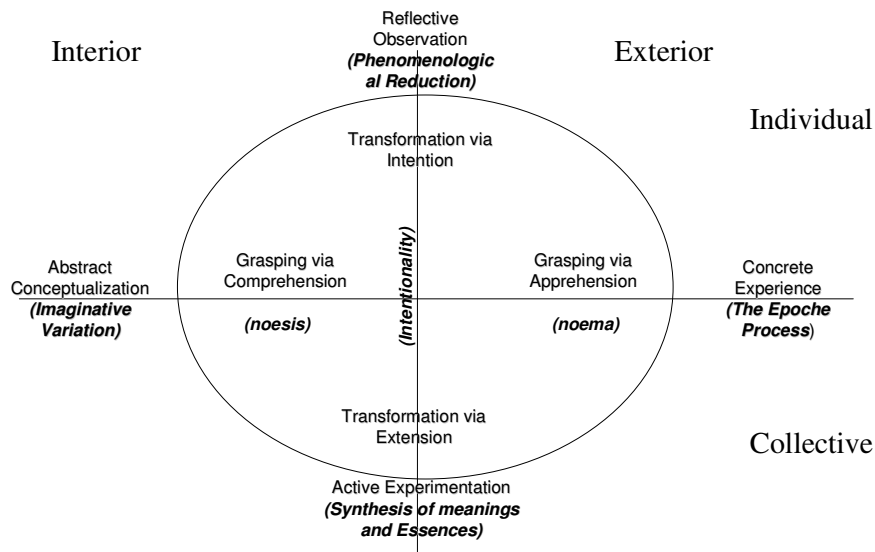


Figure 2.7. Integrated Experiential Coaching Model expanded

Source: Adapted form Wilber (1996: 71); Kolb (1984:42)

In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model it is suggested that that Kolb's (1984) Experiential learning Model initially be used as an integrative developmental methodology for coaching and learning. As the individual becomes more skilled in using the Experiential Learning process, they will eventually mature and develop into using Transcendental Phenomenology for their growth and development. Done in a disciplined way these methodologies could facilitate growth and development right up to the highest rational level, which is Wilber's (1994) Vision-logic stage and Kolb's (1984) Integration stage. Eventually, if this development continues, Transcendental Phenomenology will mature into Almaas's (2002) Inquiry method. It is Almaas's (2002) Inquiry method that will facilitate growth into and in the transpersonal bands of development. The method requires that the individual continuously inquires into their own direct experience. The need to inquire into personal experience is defined as follows by Almaas, *"To experience the richness of our Being, the potential of our soul, we must allow our experience to become more and more open, and increasingly question who we assume we are. Usually we identify with a very limited part of our potential, what we call the ego or personality. Some call it the small self. But the identity is actually a distortion of what we really are, which is a completely open flow*

*of the mystery of Being. A human being is a universe of experience, multifaceted and multidimensional. Each of us is a soul, a dynamic consciousness, a magical organ of experience in action. And each of us is in a constant state of transformation – of one experience opening to another, one action leading to another, one perception multiplying into many others; of perception growing into knowledge, knowledge leading to action, and action creating more experience. This unfolding is constant, dynamic, and full of energy. This is the nature of what we call life” (2002:5).*

It is through constantly inquiring into these dynamic experiences that we arrive at our true Essence. It is therefore argued in the Integrated Experiential Coaching model that experiential learning matures and develops with the individual from Experiential Learning to Transcendental Phenomenology to Almaas’s inquiry method. This process is represented in Figure 2.8.

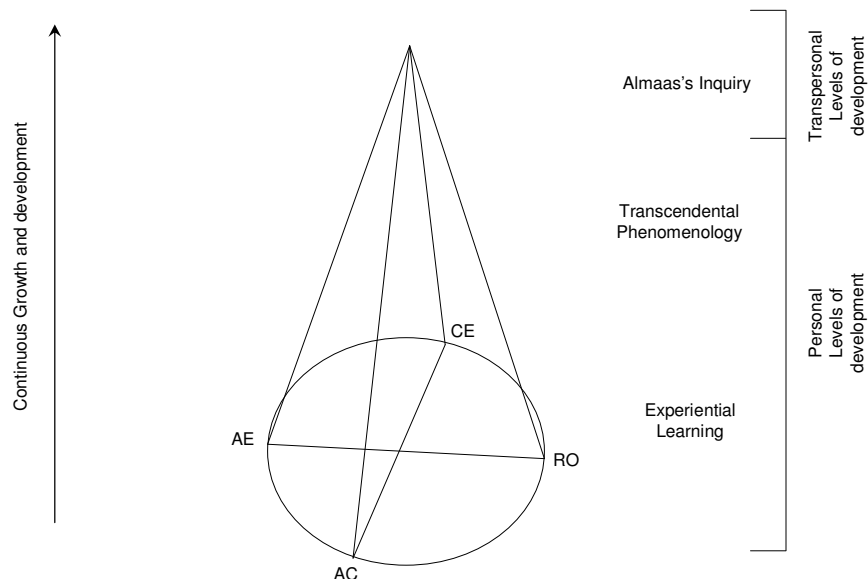


Figure 2.8. The maturity phases of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model

The strength of the Integrated Experiential Coaching model is that it allows for continuous growth and development in the personal and transpersonal levels, and it provides a practical methodology to facilitate this continuous growth and development. Most Western methodologies tend to stop at the upper levels of rational development;



some off them do not even recognize the transpersonal levels. The Integrated Experiential Coaching model honours body, mind, soul and Spirit and provides a practical methodology to help facilitate their integration.

### **2.11 Mastery**

In one sense the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is quite simple. All that it requires is for the individual to continuously go through the Experiential Learning process. There is nothing new about that. So the question has to be asked why have we not seen more people applying the methodology to their own lives in order to facilitate their own growth and development? There could be two possible answers. One reason could be that not many individuals actually understand the power of Experiential Learning. As a result it is not being used as powerfully as it could be due to ignorance. A more likely reason could be due to what Leonard (1992) calls a lack of mastery. Leonard (1992) has dedicated his life to learning, education and studying human potential. The question that continuously fascinated him was why some people master something while others do not? He soon realized that everything in life starts and ends with the individual's ability to learn, what they learn and how they learn. For Leonard (1992) the road to mastery is through learning certain skills, what ever those skills might be. The important thing to remember, however, is that all significant learning does not happen in a straight line but in stages. There are brief spurts of progress separated by periods when nothing seems to be happening. Yet it is in these times that we can learn another important skill, we learn about learning. In Leonard's understanding, mastery is not reserved for the super-talented or those born with exceptional talents. The journey of mastery starts when any individual decides to learn a new skill. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, the individual is challenged to learn the skill of Experiential Learning, learning how to learn and to practice the skill of lifelong learning.

According to Leonard (1992), learning any new skill involves relatively briefs spurts of growth followed by a slight decline and a plateau which is somewhat higher than that which preceded it. This is referred to as the mastery curve as represented by the top curve in Figure 2.9.

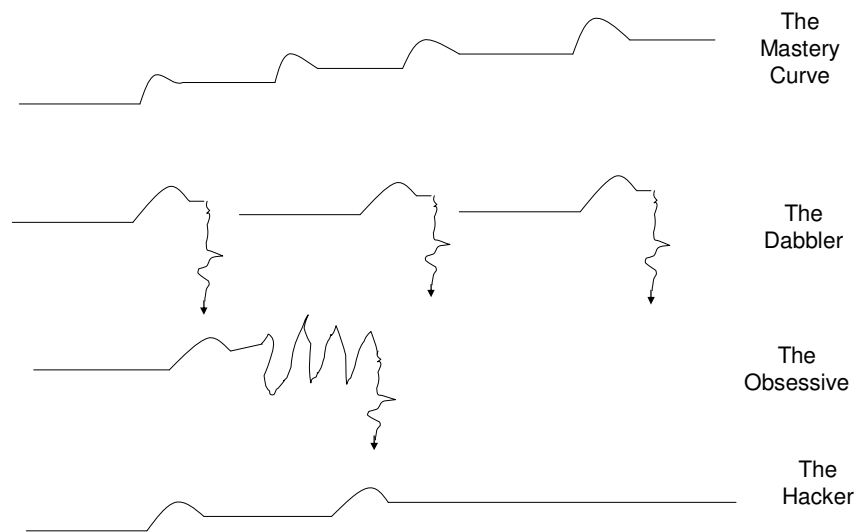


Figure 2.9. The Mastery Curve and its' enemies

Source: Adapted form Leonard (1992: 15-23)

To take the master's journey the individual has to practice diligently, striving at all times to hone the new skill and to try and attain new levels of competence. The individual has to be willing to spend most of their time on the plateau, to keep on practising the skill even when they do not seem to be getting anywhere. The reason being that as soon as the individual learns a new skill they have to think about it and have to actively try and replace old patterns of thinking, sensing and moving with new ones. People who have mastered a skill have learnt to love the plateaus and they practise their skill primarily for the sake of the practice itself. Masters have learnt that learning is going on all the time and that it is not limited to the brief spurts of noticeable progress.

### 2.11.1 The Dabbler, Obsessive and Hacker

Sadly as Leonard (1992) points out, most people go through life choosing not to take the master's journey. Instead they opt to go through life as Dabblers, Obsessives or Hackers. Dabblers love the rituals involved in getting started. They love everything

that is new. These individuals love all the latest management fads. When a new fad comes along they embrace it wholeheartedly, but when the plateau strikes, as it always does, they find it unacceptable if not incomprehensible. As a result they give up and look for the next fad.

The Obsessives are bottom line people, they do not believe in settling for second best. In their lives, it is results that count no matter how they get them. Somehow the business world has excelled at breeding these kinds of people, or conversely these kinds of individuals are drawn to the business world where this kind of mentality is highly prized and rewarded. When these individuals hit the plateaus they cannot accept it and try harder and do more of the same. The end result of this kind of behaviour is what Senge, Ross, Smith, Roberts and Kleiner (1994) call the “fixes that backfire” archetype in systems thinking. The thinking and behaviour that underlies this archetype is the belief that one needs to try the same solution just a little more, and then just a little more. Eventually the individuals concerned resist the idea of trying anything else. *“The central theme of this archetype is that almost any decision carries long-term and short-term consequences, and the two are often diametrically opposed...A solution is quickly implemented (the fix) which alleviates the symptom (the balancing loop). But the unintended consequences of the fix (the vicious cycle of the reinforcing loop) actually worsen the performance of the condition which we attempt to correct”* (Senge et al., 1994:126).

Companies face this problem all the time. The Obsessive individual does not understand the necessity for periods of development on the plateau. They are too impatient to see results and as a result they create deep systemic problems through their behaviour and actions of doing more of the same or just trying harder. They eventually burn out.

The Hacker on the other hand, is prepared to stay on the plateau indefinitely. They do not mind skipping stages essential to the development of mastery and themselves. They do just enough to get by. These are the qualified professionals who do not invest in continuous learning and professional development. Organizations are filled with these people who believed that they have arrived due to the fact that they have degrees and professional qualifications.

In reality, most individuals most probably have a bit of the Dabbler, Obsessive and Hacker within them and these characteristics prevent them from getting on the path to mastery and lifelong learning. What is required of the individual to start on the path of mastery is a willingness to want to learn, the discipline to keep on practising, an openness to their own experience and an emptiness that allows new things to come into being. An emptiness that makes them humble enough to realize that they do not know everything and that there is always something to learn. It is the kind of emptiness; according to Leonard (1992) that Jigro Kano the founder of Judo showed when he was lying on his death bed. He called his students together and requested that they bury him in his white belt. The highest-ranking judoist in the world was humble enough to realize that he was actually just a beginner. Leonard's (1992) plea is therefore that individuals start the journey of mastery by committing themselves to the discipline of lifelong learning. It is only through disciplined long-term practice that change and development comes about. After a life time of studying and exploring human potential and learning, Leonard and Murphy have the following to say, *"In a culture intoxicated with promises of the quick fix, instant enlightenment, and easy learning, it was hard to accept one of the most important lessons...Any significant long-term change requires long-term practice, whether that change has to do with learning to play the violin or learning to be a more open, loving person. We all know people who say they have been changed by experiences of a moment or a day or a weekend. But when you check it out you'll generally discover that those who ended up permanently changed had spent considerable time preparing for their life-changing experience or had continued diligently practicing the new behaviour afterward"* (1995:8).

Similarly the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model calls for disciplined long-term practice and application. It is not enough to know the theory of Experiential Learning, for growth and development to take place; the individual needs to practice the skill of Experiential Learning over a life time. It is a never ending discipline and journey.

## 2.12 Valid Knowledge

Long-term practice and discipline of the Integrated Experiential Coaching methodology is what gets the individual on the road to mastery. If the Integrated Experiential Coaching Methodology is to become a valid form of empirical and phenomenological research it will, however, have to meet what Wilber (1998) calls the *three aspects of scientific inquiry* or the *three strands of all valid knowing*. Long-term practice is not enough. The methodology has to be validated empirically and phenomenologically. The three aspects of scientific inquiry according to Wilber (1998) are,

- Instrumental injunction. This is the actual practice of doing the methodology or inquiry. It is an injunction, an experiment, a paradigm. According to Wilber (1998) it always takes the form “*If you want to know, do this.*” Here Wilber (1998) draws on the work of Thomas Kuhn who showed that science advances by means of a paradigm or exemplars. Unfortunately the new age movement and theorists have tended to misuse the word paradigm, and in their teaching they only emphasize part of what Kuhn meant by paradigm. The new age view of paradigm has come to mean that if you want to change some thing, all that is needed is to change the way you think (change you’re paradigm). By paradigm, Kuhn meant a concept and a way of doing within that concept. “*A paradigm is not merely a concept, it is an actual practice, an injunction, a technique taken as an exemplar for generating data. And Kuhn’s point is that genuine scientific knowledge is grounded in paradigms, exemplars, or injunctions. New injunctions disclose new data (new experiences), and this is why Kuhn maintained both that science is progressive and cumulative, and that it shows certain breaks or discontinuities (new injunctions bring forth new data)*” (Wilber, 1998:159). Kuhn, therefore, emphasis the injunctive strand of valid knowledge. Thinking differently is not enough, you have to practice the injunction or the methodology. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching methodology the injunction is Experiential Learning. You need to know the theory and you need to practise the methodology; the one without the other is useless. So on one level Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning Model is the injunction, but on another level it is the Active Experimentation Aspect of the Experiential Learning Model.

- Direct apprehension. This is the direct experience or the apprehension of data that is brought about by the injunction. In Kolb's (1984) language, this is grasping the data via direct apprehension as a result of active experimentation. This is the data of direct and immediate experience. It is what Almaas refers to as basic knowledge, *"So our experience is not knowledge in the usual sense of knowledge. It is not what we call ordinary knowledge – the information we have in our minds that we remember about things in the past. It is knowledge now. Basic knowledge is always direct knowledge in the moment – the stuff of our immediate experience. We usually don't call it knowledge; we call it experience, and if we are a little more sophisticated we call it perception. Perception carries more of the sense of being aware of our immediate experience, which is a palpable sense of knowingness that is basic knowledge"* (2002:78).

As Wilber (1998) points out, it is this data on which science anchors all its concrete assertions. Hence Wilber is in total agreement with empiricism that demands that all knowledge be grounded in experiential evidence. The only difference is that he recognizes sensory, mental and spiritual experience. That is why Wilber argues that scientific inquiry can be applied to empirical, phenomenological and spiritual research. All are valid fields of scientific inquiry. Experiential learning can be used for empirical learning, such as how to improve business processes or to explore a spiritual practice like meditation. Both levels will generate experiential data via direct apprehension that can be validated or invalidated. Wilber (1998) goes on to argue that knowledge that is brought forth by valid injunctions is genuine knowledge due to the fact that bad data can be rejected. His argument is that paradigms disclose data, they do not invent them.

- Communal confirmation (or rejection). This is where the data or experiences are checked by a community of people who have completed the injunction and the apprehensive strands. In a sense this is a combination of reflective observation and abstract conceptualization. Having had the experience and collected the data, an individual will reflect on it and via comprehension share that with a community who will either validate or invalidate the data. Here Wilber draws on the work of Sir Karl Popper, *"Sir Karl Popper's approach emphasizes the importance of falsifiability: genuine knowledge must be open to disproof, or else it is simply*

*dogma in disguise. Popper, in other words, is highlighting the importance of the confirmation/rejection strand in all valid knowledge; and, as we will see, this falsifiability principle is operative in every domain, sensory to mental to spiritual”* (1998: 159).

Hence it is important that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Methodology must take place within the context of a community who can validate or invalidate the data. So for example, if the Integrated Experiential Coaching methodology is used to coach business executives, then there must be a community of executives or managers who can validate or invalidate the data. Likewise if the methodology is used to teach meditation, there must be a community of meditators who can validate or invalidate the data.

In summary it is argued that Experiential Learning be used as the injunction in the Integrated Experiential Coaching methodology in order to facilitate growth and development. The data will then be collected via direct apprehension and validated in the context of a community who has adequately completed the injunction and the apprehension strands.

### **2.13 Learning Conversations**

Integrated Experiential Coaching is facilitated via means of a Learning Conversation. According to Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991), a Learning Conversation includes three different levels of conversation over time as represented in Figure 2.10.

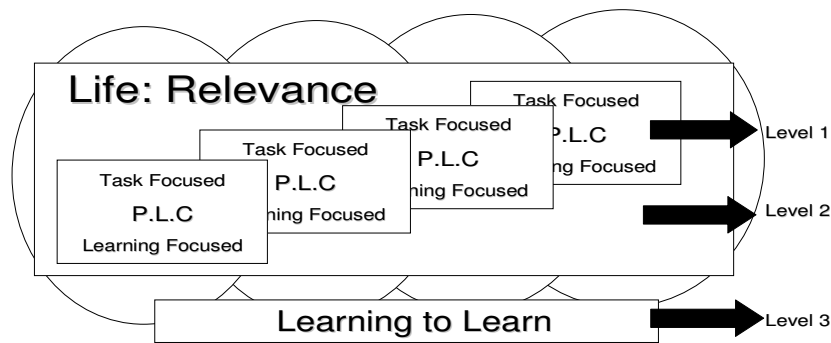


Figure 2.10. Learning Conversations

Source: Adapted from Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991:151)

Every Learning Conversation whether it be level one or level three will always take place within the context of a bigger life relevance situation (level two conversation). So it is not uncommon for the conversation to move between level one, two and three. It might start at level one (task-focused) but the individual might start questioning his or her bigger life purpose or the value of doing the particular work that they are doing. In so doing they move the conversation into a level two learning conversation. Once that has been dealt with the conversation might move back to level one. Learning Conversations are therefore very dynamic.

Level one is a task-focused Learning Conversation. For example, a coach is requested to help an individual improve his or her performance or to learn certain managerial leadership skills. Task-focused Learning Conversations are intermittent and they can extend over many cycles of task or topic activity. Experiential learning is the basis of these conversations and it is implemented by means of an adapted version of Harri-Augstein and Thomas's (1991) Personal Learning Contract (P.L.C.) as represented in Figure 2.11.



**Personal Learning Contract**

Name:.....  
Date:.....

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>What is my Purpose?</b>	<b>Action (go and do)</b>	<b>What actually was my purpose?</b>	<b>Describe the essential differences?</b>
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>How shall I judge and measure my success?</b>		<b>How well did I do?</b>	<b>Describe the essential differences?</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>What actions shall I take?</b>		<b>What did I actually do?</b>	<b>Describe the essential differences?</b>
<b>What have I learnt from this exercise?</b>				

Figure 2.11. Personal Learning Contract (P.L.C.).

Source: Adapted from Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991:151)

The client will usually come into the coaching session with a real problem or difficulty that he or she is facing (their concrete experience). In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model it is very important that the client always sets the agenda. The coach and client will then reflect on the experience (reflection-on-action) together. The client will be encouraged to make sense of what is going on by developing their own understanding or theory as to what is happening or going on (Abstract Conceptualization). If needs be, the coach can give some experiential or theoretical input into the conversation. The client will then decide on some course of action that they will experiment with to address the issue (active experimentation). For learning to happen, it is very important that everything is made very explicit and this is where the Personal Learning Contract is such a powerful tool. It makes the learning experience very explicit. Once the client has decided what they want to do (active

experimentation), they fill in the first column of the contract i.e. what is my purpose, what is it that I want to achieve? They also specify how they are going to measure themselves to determine whether they have been successful or not. Furthermore, the strategy and the action steps that they will follow are made explicit and written down. The client then goes away in between coaching sessions and actions what they said they were going to do. This takes care of the active experimentation part of the learning process. Prior to the next coaching session, the client will document what their actual purpose was, how well they actually did and what action they actually took. This teaches them to reflect on their actual concrete experience. They are also required to describe the essential differences between what they said they were going to do and what they actually did, both positive and negative, and explain why those differences exist. In so doing they raise their own levels of awareness and they start to develop their own theories about why the differences exist. This helps them to improve their abstract conceptual abilities. The coaching session combined with the Personal Learning Contract ensures that the client goes through the entire Experiential Learning processes in a structured way. It is an iterative process where the one contract can build on the other.

The main advantage of the Personal Learning Contract is that it makes the learning experience explicit. In so doing it facilitates the ability of the client to learn how they learn which is a level three Learning Conversation - learning how to learn. In the long term this is the most important learning that can happen. The more individuals can learn about how they learn, the more independent and autonomous they can become as human beings. The ultimate aim of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is to help the client become what Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) term a Self-Organized Learner (S-O-L). The essential characteristics of a Self-Organized Learner are:

- When individuals accept responsibility for managing their own learning and are no longer dependent on other people's directives and initiatives. The individual gives personal meaning to the events.
- Individuals become aware of how they learn, in other words they start to reflect on the functional components of the learning processes. That is they can recognize their need and translate it into a clearly defined purpose. They develop their own

strategies to achieve the purpose and are able to recognize the quality of the outcome they have achieved. More importantly they can critically review the cycle and implement more effective learning cycles.

- Individuals learn to appreciate the dynamic nature of the personal learning process while at the same time striving for more self-organised learning.
- To learn how to learn by continually challenging their existing partially developed skills. The aim being to transform these skills in order to achieve higher standards of personal competence.
- For individuals to recognise the value of S-O-L and to practise it as a way of life regardless of the social context.
- Individuals redefine S-O-L in their own terms in such away that the S-O-L expertise generates new dimensions of personal innovation and experimentation.
- Individuals constantly strive for quantum improvements in their own ability to learn. The person becomes better at learning on the job, from training courses, from experienced colleagues and from their own and other people's mistakes.

Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) point out that self-organized learning cannot be achieved through direct instruction (provider-centred) as this often leads to total dependency, alienation and negatively valued learning. On the other hand, to leave the individual to discover how to become a self-organized learner can take too long, hence the need for Learning Conversations and learner-centred learning. People need support and coaching to learn what Beard and Wilson (2002) call Reflect-on-Action so that they eventually develop the independent ability to Reflect-in-Action. The important thing about the conversation is that it starts with where the individual is (The individuals experience and preferred learning style) and allows as much freedom to learn as the individual can cope with. The client sets the agenda, not the coach. It is a gradual process of expanding the quality and scope of the individual's learning capability. Hence, in the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model the coach starts working with and honouring the preferred Learning Style of the individual and gradually enhancing the individual's ability to move through the complete Experiential Learning cycle. This means that the coach must make use of appropriate coaching

skills depending on where the client is at that point in time in order to facilitate the experiential learning process more effectively. A schematic presentation of the process is found in Figure 2.12.

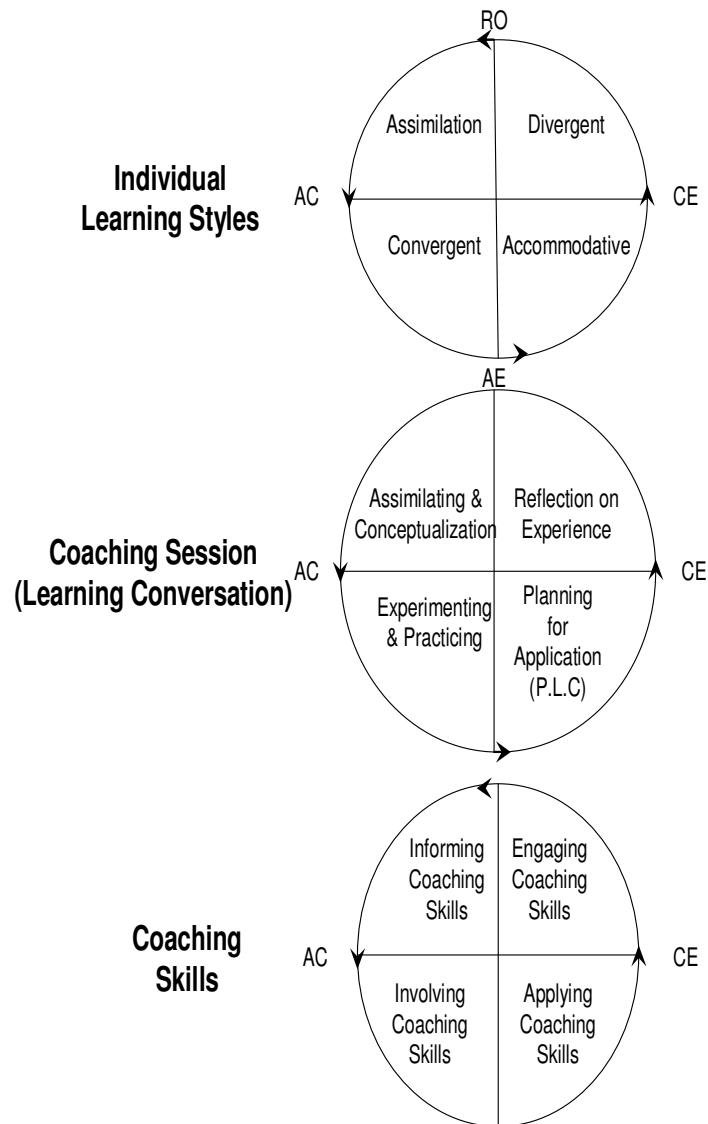


Figure 2.12. Integrated Experiential Coaching Model Skills.

Source: Adapted from Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward (1999: 16)

Brooks-Harris and Stock-Ward (1999) came up with the idea of organizing facilitation skills into four quadrants that correspond to the four learning styles. They referred to

these facilitation skills as engaging, informing, involving and applying skills. These four skills apply as easily to coaching individuals as they do to facilitating groups.

- **Engaging Coaching Skills:** These skills are used to fully involve the client in the learning conversation. Engaging skills are used to activate the knowledge that the client already has and it builds bridges between their past experience and the current learning experience. Due to the reflective nature of engaging skills, individuals with Divergent Learning Styles respond well to engaging exercises. Engaging skills include, getting clients to tell their story (narrative), reflecting, paraphrasing, asking for more information and to clarify issues, probing, challenging assumptions, brainstorming with the client and self-disclosure by the coach as and when it is relevant.
- **Informing Coaching Skills:** Informing involves teaching factual information and allowing the clients to gain new knowledge. Here there can be an element of provider-centred learning, in that the coach brings experience and theoretical knowledge to the table. Clients learn new information and are encouraged to use the concepts to understand their own experience. What is important to remember is that there is an element of provider-centred learning, but it is within the bigger context of learner-centred learning, which is the primary mode of learning. People with a preferred Assimilation Learning Style, react well to informing. Informing skills include, clarifying assumptions, giving factual or theoretical information, answering questions, pointing out what was not mentioned and inconsistencies, identifying themes, modelling new behaviour, summarizing, explaining and self-disclosure by the coach as and when it is relevant to provide information.
- **Involving Coaching Skills:** This involves active experimentation, in that it allows the client to play with new knowledge and skills. Learning is encouraged through practising with the new knowledge they have gained. This is hands-on experience, where the client experiments with what works for them. Involving activities and skills work well for people with a preferred Convergence Learning Style. Involving skills include, playing with new behaviour in the coaching session, playing with repertory grids, playing with Personal Learning Contracts, connecting various ideas, interpreting and offering ideas about possible explanations for why the individual is feeling, acting, or behaving in a certain way, challenging the client to see and do things differently, help make the clients way of learning explicit,

concentrating the discussion on the here and now, asking the client what they are feeling to get them in touch with their feelings and asking for feedback, focusing and getting the conversation back on track.

- **Applying Coaching Skills:** Here the clients personalize what they have learnt by drawing up an action strategy by means of a Personal Learning Contract, the aim being to apply what they have learnt. Because people with a preferred Accommodative Learning Style are highly action orientated they respond well to application activities. Applying skills involve, scenario planning, exploring the future, encouraging new behaviour outside the coaching session, pointing out opportunities for application, encouraging action and goal setting, developing Personal Learning Contracts and self-disclosure that helps and encourages application.

The advantage of this approach is that it caters for clients preferred Learning Styles and then aims to help them move through the complete Experiential Learning process to help them become Self Organized Learners. This model encourages the coach to use different coaching skills for different clients and different situations. At times it might be very valuable to use engaging skills, but in a different situation informing skills might be more appropriate. Yes, the client will eventually get there if you keep asking questions, but sometimes the coach and client can be up against time constraints. On the other hand, engaging skills could fail with a very strong Accommodator. The person could see the coach as being too fuzzy. Hence there is a danger that some coaching models opt for “a coaching style” and ignore or deny the value of other styles. The Co-Active Coaching Model of Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandal for example has as one of its four cornerstones an Engaging Style, *“The coach does not have the answers; the coach has questions...This is why we say that the coach’s job is to ask questions, not to give answers. We have found that clients are more resourceful, more effective, and generally more satisfied when they find their own answers. And because they found the answers themselves, they are more likely to follow through with action”* (1998: 4).

Yet at the same time they believe that coaching is a learning conversation because it is a conversation that wants to deepen learning which in turn leads to action. However, it is not a conversation that informs, explains or rectifies. The objective is action and learning not specific results. What is very clear is that their coaching model is not an Experiential Learning Conversation. They have limited their coaching model to be an Engaging Learning Conversation and decided to ignore the other three aspects of Experiential Learning. Sadly even coaches who claim to use experiential learning as the basis of their coaching often tend to limit themselves to an Engaging Style.

Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991) suggest that the coach helps the client to externalize the Learning Conversation (Reflection-on-action) in order to improve its quality and to make the conversation as explicit to the client as they learn. As the client's awareness and skill develops, the coach gradually passes control of the Learning Conversation over to the client. If the Learning Conversation has been successful, over time there should be evidence of the client moving from dependence on the coach to more self autonomy. The individual starts to take responsibility and control of their own learning. Not only do they move beyond their own Preferred Learning Style to using the complete Experiential Learning cycle, they even start to identify and challenge their own learning myths. Based on the cumulative impact of past history every individual brings certain attitudes and assumptions about learning into the learning situation. These attitudes, assumptions and beliefs are personal constructs or myths that the individual holds of themselves, in terms of their ability to learn and how they learn. As a result of 20 years of action research, Harri-Augstein and Webb (1995) have identified a category system of personal myths about learning that are represented in Table 2.2.

<p><b>A Myths about ‘conditions’ of learning</b></p> <p><b>Physical</b></p> <p><i>Time of day:</i> Just after sunrise; just after midnight. <i>Place:</i> Small &amp; intimate; airy and well lit. <i>Span of time:</i> Short; long. <i>Body position:</i> sitting still; walking; lotus position. <i>Noise levels:</i> Peace and quiet, radio as background.</p> <p><b>Social</b></p> <p><i>Solitude:</i> Alone; with others; in a team; in a family setting; with a chosen friend; in a unisex context.</p>
<p><b>B Myths about opportunities for learning</b></p> <p><b>Situation</b></p> <p>Within a problem solving environment. In a crises. When everything is running smoothly. In a lecture. Using a business game. In a laboratory doing project work. In an intensive experiential workshop. With a simulator that logs my action for replay. In a discussion with a consultant / advisor. Quality circles. Using computers. Using videos / books. On the job.</p> <p><b>Type of event</b></p> <p>A week’s intensive course. An outdoor leadership course. A competitive event. A final year project. Preparing for an exam. Attending a relate session. A well-structured lecture.</p> <p><b>Nature of resources</b></p> <p>Spreadsheet. A counsellor. Observing an experienced worker. Videos with rich examples. Research journals and specialist books. Work placement. Feasibility exercises.</p>
<p><b>C Myths about processes of learning</b></p> <p><i>Learning by:</i> Doing. Listening. Questioning. Feeling. Making patterns. Repetition and drill. Selecting principles. Making a mental map. Visualizing. Affirmation.</p>
<p><b>D Myths about capacities for learning</b></p> <p>A memorizing capacity. A mind for figures and relations. Linguistic skills. Brainstorming abilities. A colour sense. A spatial awareness. Manipulative skills. Risk taking. Long concentration. Sustained commitment.</p>
<p><b>E Attitudinal myths: personal characteristics, traits and talents</b></p> <p>Practical bent. Sharp eye. Feminine touch. Musical ability. Persistence and doggedness. Mathematical talent. Macho nature.</p>

Table 2.2. A simple category system of personal learning myths.

Source: Harri-Augstein and Webb (1995:20)

Obviously every one of these myths has some truth and relevance about them, that is to say that they might have a physiological base; they do not just exist in the mind as a ‘myth.’ Levine (2002) has identified eight categories, or neurodevelopmental systems. The eight neurodevelopmental systems are, the attention control system, the memory system, the languages system, the spatial ordering system, the sequential ordering system, the motor system, the higher thinking system and the social thinking system. These systems do not perform as soloists, they all interact to aid the learning processes



and to form an individual's unique mind profile. Some children and even adults have deficiencies in one or more of these systems, which leads to them having some kind of learning problem, or a profile that does not operate optimally in a given context. The point, however, is that it is a partial truth and not 'the absolute truth.' Dr Levine sums it up as follows. *"Every one of our children ambles down the highly judgmental corridors of school each day dragging his mind's profile, a partly hidden spreadsheet of personal strengths and weaknesses. And throughout every moment of the school day that profile gets put to the test. Some of our children are blessed with profiles that are magnificently matched to expectations, while others are saddled with profiles that fail to mesh with demands – an all too common disparity that can arise at any age. If a child you know has a profile that is not conforming to demands, don't give up and don't allow him to give up either. That profile has a great chance of coming into its own sooner or later. That's because we know a pattern of strengths and weaknesses may operate particularly well at specific ages and in certain contexts but not nearly so optimally in other times and under alternative circumstance"* (2002:35-36).

Individuals therefore need to continuously challenge these myths, which may have been valid at a certain age or in a certain context, in order to improve their learning abilities. Part of the learning experience is to make these myths explicit so that the individual can distance themselves from their limitations. Harri-Augestein and Webb (1995) believe that individuals can only distance themselves from their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs and myths through a process of gradual but deepening reflection on personal learning experiences.

Not only is it important for the client's myths to be surfaced and made explicit, the same applies to the coach. The coach might have personal learning myths and myths about the learning of others. Hence in the Integrated Experiential Coaching model, the coach shares his or her preferred Learning Style and any myths they are aware of. By adopting a Learning Conversation stance, the client and the coach can work together for personal growth. It is a Learning Conversation for both parties; both client and coach can grow and develop as a result of the learning experience. It is an ongoing process of learning that should lead to self-organized learning. Harri-Augestein and

Webb define Self Organised Learning as follows. *“The conversational construction, reconstruction and exchange of personally significant, relevant and viable meanings, with purposiveness and controlled awareness. The patterns of meaning we construct are the basis for all our actions. By ‘significant’ we mean how the new meaning is valued in the person’s life space. By ‘relevant’ we mean how it relates to the person’s intentionality and specific purposes. By ‘viable’ we mean how it works for the learner in their actions in life. By ‘purposiveness’ we mean a deep understanding of how we motivate ourselves-how we channel our energies in particular directions to meet our needs. By ‘controlled awareness’ we mean deep personal conversations which tap inner processes in ways which open up the richness of personal experience”* (1995: 46-47).

It is clear that this definition applies to the client as well as to the coach. If the coach for example is bored; and the conversation has no relevance or viable meaning for the coach, the coach could hinder the learning process of the client. Learning Conversations call for an openness and natural curiosity from both the client and the coach. The coach is an expert in facilitating the Learning Conversation, but like the client, remains open to the learning process as it unfolds and is therefore continuously on the journey of Self-Organised Learning. It is a journey that starts with Experiential Learning, and eventually matures into Transcendental Phenomenology and ultimately Almaas’ Inquiry method.

Thus the definition of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model can be enhanced by saying that coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher’s Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber’s Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb’s Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Harri-Augstein and Thomas’s concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool.

## 2.14 Stages in the Coaching Relationship

The Integrated Experiential Coaching model follows an adapted version of Kilburg's (2000) coaching stages as represented in Figure 2.13. The stages are the same at the macro and micro level. At macro level we mean the contractual coaching agreement, i.e. from the time the contract starts to the time it ends. At micro level we mean that every coaching session will go through the same or a similar process. What follows is a description of the macro level process.

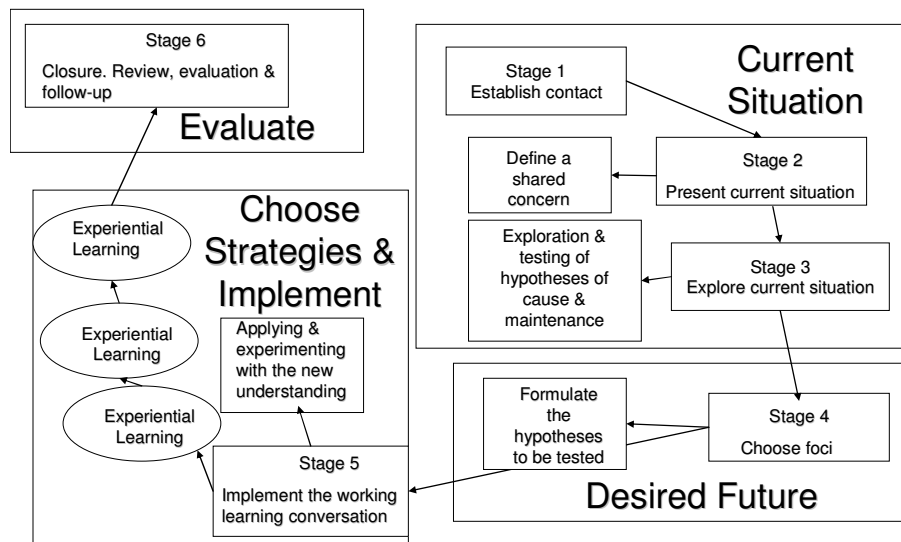


Figure 2.13. Stages in the Coaching Relationship.

Source: Adapted from. Kilburg (2000:81)

Stage one involves establishing contact with the client. The client could have contacted the coach directly, or the coach could have been selected by the Human Resource department. In this stage the coach and the client are introduced and the two parties agree on whether they want to work together or not. In Lane's Case Formulation Method (1990), which was initially used in Cognitive-Behavioural Psychology and later adapted to coaching, this stage is about trying to define a shared concern that both parties are interested in exploring. Here the coach and the client discuss and agree on things like the purpose of the coaching, the process that will be

followed, who the players are and other important stakeholders that should be involved. The aim is to arrive at a contracted piece of work based on a shared concern. This last point is a valuable contribution that Lane (1990) has made to the profession of coaching. It is important that both parties define a shared concern; if no shared concern can be defined it is better for the coach to walk away from the situation. The coach must be interested in the issue at hand; if not, the coaching relationship is doomed to failure before it even starts.

Stage two involves presenting the current situation. Here the client is asked to share their life story. Critically important is that it is the client's story, not the story as told or understood by a third party. The client shares his or her subjective story. Egan (2002) is of the opinion that helping the client to tell their story is very important and should not be underestimated. Referring to the work of Pennebaker (1995) he notes, *"An important...feature of therapy is that it allows individuals to translate their experiences into words. The disclosure process itself, then, may be as important as any feedback the client receives from the therapist"* (Egan, 2002:139-140).

According to Egan (2002) self disclosure through story telling can help reduce the initial stress, in that it helps the client to get things out in the open which in turn can have a cathartic effect. It is not uncommon to hear clients say to the coach "that you are the only person who knows this about me." In so doing, story telling helps the client to unburden themselves by getting rid of secrets they have carried around for years. Story telling helps to clarify problem situations and unexploited situations, especially if the story can be told in a non-judgmental environment. It is important to help the client tell their story in as much detail as possible, i.e. specific experiences, behaviours and emotions. As Egan points out, *"Vague stories lead to vague options and actions"* (2002:140). More importantly, story telling can help facilitate relationship building between the coach and the client. To facilitate the relationship building process the coach must learn to work with all styles of story telling. Every individual is unique and has a different story and a way of telling their story. Therefore it is important to start where the client starts. Stories are a rich source for identifying the client's deficits as well as their resourcefulness. The aim in the Integrated Experiential Coaching model is to help the client build on their own resourcefulness. In so doing, it is in full agreement with Egan (2002) who believes

that incompetent helpers concentrate on the person's deficits. Skilled professionals, although not blind to the person's deficits, capitalize on the persons' resources and resourcefulness. Through storytelling it is possible for the coach and the client to spot and develop unused opportunities.

In stage three the coach and the client explore the current situation even further. In Egan's Model (2002) this stage is about helping the client break through blind spots that prevent them from seeing their unexplored opportunities, themselves and their problem situations as they really are. In so doing it is possible to help the client screen or choose possible problems and / or opportunities to work on. Lane (1990) refers to this stage as the exploration and testing of hypotheses of cause and maintenance. Every problem and / or opportunity that is selected is a hypothesis. It is a hypothesis because at the time it is the most obvious leveraged problem and / or opportunity to choose to work with. The hypothesis might change over time and it is therefore an open-ended experiment. It is what Brunch (1998) refers to as "pseudo-experimenting" because it involves interview logic instead of controlled experiments. It is "pseudo-experimentation" because the clinical context and experimental rigor is either not possible or not desirable. In this regard, Lane (1990) and Bruch's (1998) hypothesis-testing experimentation is similar to that used by reflective practitioners, *"Their hypothesis-testing experiment is a game with the situation. They seek to make the situation conform to their hypothesis but remain open to the possibility that it will not. Thus their hypothesis-testing activity is neither self-fulfilling prophecy, which insures against the apprehension of disconfirming data, nor is it the neutral hypothesis testing of the method of controlled experiment, which calls for the experimenter to avoid influencing the object of study and to embrace disconfirming data. The practice situation is neither clay to be moulded at will nor an independent, self-sufficient object of study from which the inquirer keeps his distance. The inquirer's relation to the situation is transactional. He shapes the situation, but in conversation with it, so that his own models and appreciations are also shaped by the situation. The phenomena that he seeks to understand are partially his own making; he is in the situation he seeks to understand. This is another way of saying that the action by which he tests his hypothesis is also a move by which he tries to effect a desired change to the situation, and a probe by which he explores it. He understands the situation by trying to change it, and considers the resulting changes not as a defect of experimental method but as*

*the essence of its success*” (Schön, 1983: 150-151). In stage three the client and the coach therefore experiment with various options and hypothesis. The first three stages deal with the current reality of the client.

In stage four the emphasis moves on to the desired future. The client is encouraged to spell out possibilities for a better future. According to Egan’s (2002) model this is where the coach helps the client to choose realistic and challenging goals that are real solutions to the problems or unexploited opportunities identified in stage four. Lane (1990) refers to this stage as the formulation of the hypothesis to be tested. It’s getting a sense of what the issue is that the client wants to work with. Here the client creates a model that they can go and experiment with in the world. It is here that the client defines ways to change that are desirable, feasible and lead to action. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model this is done by means of a Personal Learning Contract. The client defines their purpose; what they want to achieve, how they will know whether they have been successful (measurement criteria) and the strategies that they will implement to achieve that. This is the overarching Personal Learning Contract. It is however, important to remember that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model does cater for various levels of consciousness and that the clarity of goal setting will depend on what level the client is working on. If for example, the client wants to lose weight or achieve certain business objectives, then it is very important to set clear and realistic expectations and goals. On the other hand if the client is exploring the transpersonal levels of consciousness, goal setting can actually be a major stumbling block to their progress. The Jesuit psychologist De Mello puts it so beautifully, *“You don’t have to do anything to acquire happiness. The great Meister Eckhart said very beautifully, “God is not attained by a process of addition to anything in the soul, but by a process of subtraction.” You don’t do anything to be free, you drop something. Then you’re free”* (1990:82). However, if you then set your self a goal or objective to “drop something” you have totally missed the point.

Step five involves implementing and going through a number of Learning Conversations for the specified contractual period. According to Lane (1990) it is the process of applying and experimenting with the new understandings gained through the coaching sessions. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching model, each Learning Conversation is followed by a two week break where the client must go and

experiment and apply what they defined in their PLC. Before the next session they will evaluate what they actually did and compare it to what they said they were going to do and explain the differences. The sessions can be iterative in that the PLC's tend to build on each other or they can fluctuate between the three different types of Learning Conversations. Sessions generally last for two hours.

The final step is closure and review. Here the coach, client and if needs be an organizational representative will review the process and decide on whether to renew the contract or to terminate the coaching relationship. To bring the coaching relationship to closure, each client is asked to write a reflective essay about what they have learnt from the coaching experience. The reason for doing this is twofold; it is a helpful way to bring final closure to the learning experience and the coaching relationship and it further enhances the ability of the client to reflect on their actions and their own learning.

## **2.15 Summary**

This chapter integrated the Integral Model of Wilber (1995), Kolb's (1984) Experiential Learning Model, Transcendental Phenomenology of Moustakas (1994), Schumacher's (1978) Four Fields of Knowledge, Harri-Augstein and Thomas's (1991) Learning Conversations and Jaques and Clements's (1997) Stratified Systems Theory to develop a new theoretical coaching model that I call the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. This model proposes that coaching is about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development. It is integrated in that it caters for Schumacher's Four Fields of Knowledge and Wilber's Integral Model which caters for personal development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential in that it uses Kolb's Experiential Learning model as the injunction and uses Harri-Augstein and Thomas's concept of Learning Conversations as the primary learning tool.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The practice setting and refinement of the model**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter starts with how the Integrative Experiential Coaching Model was enhanced in order for it too meet the business requirements of T-Systems South Africa. It then takes the theoretical Integrative Experiential Coaching Model and adds a business context to it. This is done by incorporating strategy formulation via the Balanced Scorecard of Kaplan and Norton (1996) and organisational design principles, with reference to the work of Galbraith et al. (2002) and Rehm (1997). All of this has to happen in a world of managerial complexity which can overwhelm executives. Having set the business context, the chapter then explores the individual leadership competencies of Jaques and Clement (1997) and how those competencies could help an executive cope with managerial complexity. What becomes clear is that within the business context, coaching is not therapy. Using the work of Peltier (2001) a clear distinction is made between coaching and therapy. Lastly, referring to the work of Oshery (1999) and Kilburg (2000) it is shown that behavioural problems manifested by individuals within an organisation could be intrapsychic or due to systemic organisational design problems or even a combination of both. Hence it is argued that an executive coaching intervention should be aimed at working with CP, V, K/S and Wi within the system that the individual operates. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, executive coaching is therefore about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development with the aim of improving individual and organizational performance. It is not therapy.



### **3.2 Selling the model to T-Systems and further enhancements to the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model**

T-Systems South Africa was one of my first clients I acquired after I started my own business. T-Systems is an information technology (IT) company that specialises in large outsourcing contracts. I got involved with the company when their relationship with their biggest client was at an all time low. I was contracted to facilitate experiential learning workshops between the two companies to try and uncover what had gone wrong and to develop a way forward. These workshops involved the most senior people in both companies. What we discovered in these workshops was that both companies were structured incorrectly. Their organisational structures did not support the critical business processes. In fact the structures worked against the processes. As a result of these findings T-Systems went through a major restructuring. Up until then the entire executive team of T-Systems resided in Johannesburg. In response to the needs of their biggest client they decided to split the country into two regions, namely; North and South, with the North residing in Johannesburg and the South residing in Cape Town. Mr Arrie Redelinghuis was promoted as the executive responsible for the South and moved down to Cape Town.

Shortly after arriving in Cape Town, Arrie contracted me to do some process improvement work for him in one of his divisions. While doing this work Arrie and I often used to talk about executive coaching as a possible intervention within the company. This culminated in him asking me to do a formal presentation to him on coaching and the benefits it could have for his business. Fortunately this was at the time that I had already developed the embryonic Integrated Experiential Coaching Model in PowerPoint and shown it to Professors David Lane and Mike van Oudshoorn. Prior to doing the presentation to Arrie I did however; make a few additions to the PowerPoint presentation in order to make the model more relevant / specific to T-Systems. I tried to focus the model more on the business challenges that T-systems was facing. As a result I moved from a more macro level to a more micro level focusing more on the right hand quadrants of the model.

At the time T-Systems was busy implementing the Balanced Scorecard throughout the organisations, which was very fortunate for me because I had gained a very good

working knowledge of the Balanced Scorecard while doing the transformation process at Norwich Life and the merger of Norwich and Fedsure Life. As a result of those experiences I had come to appreciate how helpful the Balanced Scorecard could be to help structure peoples thinking in terms of strategy development and implementation. I found it to be a very helpful learning tool, in that it facilitated a structured approach to making assumptions explicit so that they could be challenged and tested. If done correctly it could also help to align the entire organisation with the strategy. For me the Balance Scorecard was therefore a good strategy tool that could be applied in the bottom right hand quadrant of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. I had a good working knowledge of the methodology and T-Systems was busy implementing it in any case. My reasoning was that any coaching that took place should be within the context, aligned with and supporting the company's strategy. The Balanced Scorecard gave us all a common language and a strategic context.

Given that I been involved in the process that led to the restructuring of T-Systems and at the time was busy doing some process work for the company, it was only natural to integrate that into the coaching model to show how coaching could support managers with business process design and implementation and how that supported the company's Balanced Scorecard. By its very nature, any change in the company's critical business processes would have an impact on the organisational structure, T-Systems' experience with their biggest client had proven that to them. I therefore had to address the issue of organisational design in the coaching model. The Balanced Scorecard, business process design and organisational design were all critical issues that the company was wrestling with at the time and I had to show how coaching could be used to support these activities.

Having defined the tools that could be used in the bottom right hand quadrant of the coaching model, I then focused my attention on the top right hand quadrant. I asked myself what competencies managers would need to effectively implement and manage the Balanced Scorecard, business process design and organisational design? Over the years I had seen leadership models come and go and I was old enough to have a healthy scepticism of all the fads that come and go. One model that I could however, identify with more and more was Elliot Jacques leadership competencies. I especially liked his concept of cognitive power which is the potential strength of cognitive

processes in individuals. His research seemed to indicate that if an individual's cognitive power did not match the level of complexity required for the task, the complexity would eventually overwhelm the individual. In my experience I had seen this happen in practice a number of times. Furthermore, I knew that this concept would go down very well within T-Systems as they tested individual's cognitive power as part of their selection process. The other aspect of Jacques model that strongly appealed to me was his idea that any attempt to define leadership qualities and traits was misguided. Over the years I have seen the damage that has been done to individuals by trying to force them into certain moulds. The leaders I had come to admire and respect over time never seemed to fit into any neat description or model. These individuals all seemed to have a unique set of strengths and weaknesses that was peculiar to them. So intuitively there was something within me that identified with what Jacques was saying.

What I did not know at the time was that Jacques leadership competencies were actually implied on level 3 of the generic T-Systems International key competencies. Level 3 and below are senior executives and board members within T-Systems. Jacques leadership competencies were therefore in complete alignment with that of T-Systems internationally. This coincidence greatly aided my attempts to sell the coaching model to Arrie and the rest of the organization.

I did the presentation to Arrie who liked what he saw, but challenged me to refine the model even further. He was very adamant that he did not want just another "psychological" intervention and wanted to know how this model was different to therapy. As a result I had to go back refine the model and show him that this model was not about therapy (although it allowed for therapeutic moments and insights) but about experiential learning and growth. This is where I found Peltier's work invaluable in helping me to draw the distinction between my model and therapy more clearly. (I am not denying that therapy can be a good coaching model, just that my model is not based on a therapeutic approach.)

Having done the refinements, I re-presented the model to Arrie. Having satisfied his requirements he told me that he would like to implement a pilot project for coaching within his organization. He asked me to make the same presentation to Mardia van der

Walt Korsten the General Manager of Human resources and if she was happy with what was presented we could move forward with the implementation of a pilot project.

The rest of this chapter involves the writing up of the theory underpinning the business context and integrating it with the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model.

### 3.3 The theory underpinning the business and practice context

In the previous chapter it was proposed that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model facilitates integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development. This chapter will attempt to give that Meta theoretical model a business context to arrive at a theoretical executive coaching model and in so doing, it moves into a more micro level; dealing with tools that can be applied in the various quadrants. I will argue that executive coaching is a one on one developmental initiative within the context that the individual operates as represented in Figure 3.1.

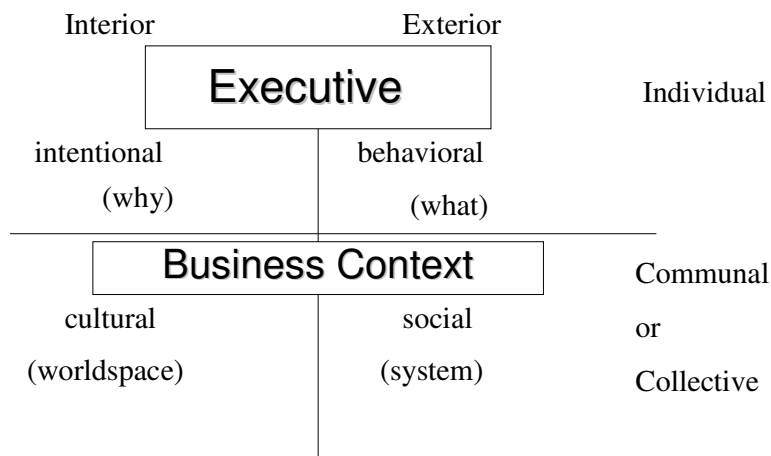


Figure 3.1. Executive Coaching

Source: Adapted from Wilber (1996: 71)

In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model it is about working with the executive or senior manager's behavioural and intentional content within the context of the social (system) and cultural (world space) that they operate. By emphasizing a more holistic and systemic approach to executive development, the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is in agreement with O'Neill's (2000) systems approach to executive coaching. But as was pointed out before, a systems approach tends to be limited to the lower right-hand quadrant, this model is more holistic than a pure systems thinking approach.

### **3.4 Strategy formulation and implementation**

Executive work is about strategy formulation and implementation. For years strategy seemed to be a very fuzzy and vague concept. Executives would design the most amazing strategies for their organizations and then have even more amazing explanations for why they could not implement the desired strategies. Somehow, strategy formulation was limited to the question, "What must we do to outperform the competition?" The "what" was the burning question and in an attempt to answer the "what question" a whole strategy consulting industry was born. Very soon all major corporations were hiring these large strategy consulting firms to help them define what they needed to do. Not surprising, therefore, that it was not long before all companies in the same sector had similar strategic objectives. A good case in point currently is the Financial Industry in South Africa. Despite them all claiming to have a unique strategy, on closer inspection they actually all have very similar strategies, they all want to be the first to successfully implement a workable Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution. They all face the same problem; they do not have an integrated view of their clients. Their clients exist on a number of disjointed records in various databases that are not integrated. So the interesting thing is that they all know what they need to do. The true strategic question is therefore not what they need to do, because they know that; they all hired the same consultants to help them define the "what." The more relevant strategic question is why can't they implement what they need to do? What is stopping them from actually implementing these chosen strategies?

Could the problem be that for years, we have created an artificial belief or assumption in our minds? An assumption based on a distinction that only exists in our minds and

not in reality, the distinction between strategy formulation and implementation / operations. Strategy formulation was seen to be the work of the executive team and implementation was seen to be the work of the rest of the organization. Add to that, the very real problem of communicating the strategy to the entire organization. How many people in organizations actually have a clear understanding of what the executive's strategy is and what their contributing role is in implementing that strategy? The reality is that in many organizations strategy implementation continues to be an ongoing challenge for the executive team. How do you formulate a strategy and then align a whole organization with that strategy in such a way that there is continuous feedback on whether the strategy is actually being implemented and delivering the desired strategic objectives?

### **3.5 The Balanced Scorecard**

Thankfully, a methodology and a tool now exists that enables in my opinion a more holistic approach to strategy formulation and implementation. That tool and methodology is the Balanced Scorecard developed by Kaplan and Norton (1996). The Balanced Scorecard is built on four perspectives. The first two perspectives answer the “what” question of the strategy, what is it that the organization must do to outperform its competition? Those two perspectives are,

- The financial perspective: The critical question that needs to be answered is, “What must the company do to satisfy its shareholders?”
- The customer perspective: Here the question is, “What do customers expect from the company?” What must the company do to satisfy its customers?

The last two perspectives address the “how” question of strategy, how is the company going to deliver on the first two perspectives? It is often the absence of these two perspectives that explains why many organizations are not able to implement the strategies they have formulated. The last two perspectives are,

- The internal perspective: Here the strategic question is. “What internal processes must the organization excel at to satisfy their shareholders and customers?”
- The learning and growth perspective: “What competencies need to be developed to enable the internal business processes?”

The strength of the Balanced Scorecard is that it forces the executive to test their assumptions via cause and effect relationships. Strategy formulation has always depended on making certain assumptions in very complex and uncertain environments and given the reality of the business environment it will stay that way. Prior to the Balanced Scorecard, however, those assumptions were often not made explicit, tested and challenged. Given that the Balanced Scorecard is built on cause and effect relationships, assumptions now have to be made explicit and be tested. (That does not imply that it is possible to reduce the business context into a simple cause and effects model, we all know that reality is far to complex for that. It does, however, challenge us to make our assumptions explicit and test and challenge those assumptions to the best of our abilities.) So for example, the company needs to make x amount of profit. To make that profit they need profitable customers, which force them to identify those customers by carefully segmenting their market to understand their needs. As a result there are two internal processes that they must excel at. One is the ability to segment the market or at least manage a company that can do the segmentation for them, and the second is product development. In order to do that, they need certain competencies within the company. By thinking through the cause and effect relationships, all the underlying assumptions are made explicit and they can be tested.

Testing and challenging assumptions are not enough. The question is, does the logic work in reality? That is why in the Balanced Scorecard all four perspectives need to identify measurable indicators. The old adage, what is not measured is not managed still applies and even more so. The Balanced Scorecard employs both leading and lagging indicators. Financial measurements are lagging indicators. Annual financial statements come out at the end of a financial time period, the damage is done and there is nothing that can be done about it. Employee discontent on the other hand is a leading indicator. It does not take a rocket scientist to work out that discontented staff will eventually affect business processes which will eventually have an impact on client satisfaction and ultimately the bottom line.

Built into the Balanced Scorecard is a process of dynamic feedback, via the cause and effect relationships. Given that all four perspectives are being measured, the executives are continuously receiving feedback on the state of the organization and

their ultimate strategy. In so doing, the Balanced Scorecard facilitates learning within an organization. It integrates very well with experiential learning. In fact it is a tool that can be used for Experiential Learning. Strategy is a function of reflecting on concrete experience. Based on their concrete experience of the organizations and the industry in which they function, executives continually need to reflect on what they need to do within that environment. Based on their reflection they should come up with a strategy that they believe is appropriate for their organization and formulate a Balanced Scorecard (Abstract conceptualization). They will then actively experiment with that strategy via implementation of the Balanced Scorecard, continuously adapting the strategy to the needs of the business environment (concrete experience). The Balanced Scorecard is therefore not a once off event, but a continuous learning process. It is a dynamic learning experience. In so doing the Balanced Scorecard methodology facilitates a movement away from pure traditional strategic planning to what Perry, Scott and Smallwood (1993) call *Real-Time Strategy*. In this approach strategy is seen as a continuous process of improvisation of the operational strategies in response to the dynamic environment. Improvisation on the other hand, is dependent on people's ability to learn from their own experience.

The Balanced Scorecard is therefore a powerful methodology that integrates strategy and operations through making all assumptions explicit and testing them through a disciplined process of analysing all the cause and effect relationships between all four perspectives. Unfortunately due to a lack of *Mastery* this is often not the way that the Balanced Scorecard has been implemented in practice. What it has degenerated into is a measurement tool that is used to measure companies' often disassociated strategic thrusts. Various strategic thrusts are identified and then slotted into one of the four perspectives. And if the strategic thrust does not fit neatly into one of the four perspectives, a fifth or sixth perspective is created. So for example, it is not uncommon to see a fifth perspective namely, Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) in South African Balanced Scorecards. Currently BEE is a big issue in South Africa and has to be a strategic thrust because it is a legislative requirement. The problem is that BEE is seen as an independent thrust, with no connection to the strategy at all. Yes, it is a legislated requirement and as such, every company in South Africa should see it as a critical business process that they need to excel at. Hence it should be treated like any other critical business process and form part of the internal perspective of the



Balanced Scorecard. Cause and effect relationships must be determined to show how BEE affects the strategy and what competencies the company needs, to excel at BEE. Creating a fifth perspective is missing the point of the Balanced Scorecard completely.

Over the years knowingly or unknowingly, many executives have come to believe that their emphasis should be on the first two perspectives, namely; the financial and customer perspectives. Kaplan and Norton (1993) point out that that is an incorrect notion or belief. Their methodology clearly shows that the first two perspectives are the result of the last two perspectives. Customer satisfaction and financial rewards are the result of having the correct business processes and competencies in place. In this regard Kaplan and Norton (1993) are suggesting a new way of thinking about what is important and in so doing shifting executive attention to what. Goldratt's (1990) Theory of Constraints refers to as Throughput. Both agree that it is a fundamental switch in executive thinking. Goldratt (1990) believes that it is a fundamental flaw to place operating expenses as the dominant measure because it gives the impression that the organization is made up of independent variables. Putting the emphasis of Throughput forces the organization to realize that resources have to work in concert in an interlinked process for a substantial time. In so doing, executives will realize that the organization "operates as an assemblage of dependent variables". It is business processes that are primary, not operating expenses. The work of executives is to architect organizations for long-term sustainability. Enron and Arthur Anderson are very good examples of companies that went into liquidation because the executives were focusing on manipulating finances instead of architecting organizations to continuously deliver to their customers. Somehow, in our day and age we have lost the art or science of architecting and designing organizations for long term sustainability.

### **3.6 The Design problem**

The reason why so many organizations cannot deliver or implement their strategies is because their business processes and structures do not align and support each other. Even worse, the structures often prevent the business processes from functioning correctly or the Information Technology Architecture does not support the desired

business processes. There is no alignment between the financial and customer perspectives, the internal business processes, organizational structure, the required competencies and the reward system. What the Balanced Scorecard gives is a disciplined learning methodology that enables the executive to align all these elements and too architect an appropriate organization. If any of these perspectives are missing or not aligned, strategy and its implementation will remain an ever-elusive goal. Galbraith, Downey and Kates (2002) belief that an unaligned organizational design will result in any of the following,

- If there is no clear or agreed upon strategy the consequence will be confusion throughout the organization. There will be no common direction and as a result people will be pulling in different directions. At the same time there will be no well defined criteria for decision making and as a result everything becomes a strategic thrust. It becomes very difficult to decide what is important and what is not. In a world of unlimited resources and no constraints that is not a problem. The reality according to Goldratt's (1990) Theory of Constraints, however, is that every organization has some form of constraints. If that was not true, the through put for any organization would be limitless. Given the Theory of Constraints and resource limitations the art of strategic leadership according to Perry et al. (1993) involves the ability to say "no." How can anybody say "no" in the absence of well-defined criteria for decision making?
- If the organizational structure is not aligned to the strategy it will result in friction. There is an inability to mobilize resources which leads to ineffective execution. This in turn leads to lost opportunities for competitive advantage. Jaques and Clement (1997) believe that an organizational structure lies in the pattern of relationships amongst the various roles that people fulfil within the organization. Roles set the limits and expectations on the behaviour that is required. Hence all social relationships take place within the context of social structures that are defined by specific roles. If all relationships were totally unstructured, people would not know what to do or how to act. Leadership accountability and authority are therefore defined by specified roles and not by personal characteristics or traits. That is why they believe that leadership is context dependent and tied to a role. Using Winston Churchill as an example, they ask whether Churchill was a great "leader?" The answer seems to be that he was

during the Second World War, but not before or after it. Hence they conclude, *“Does this mean he somehow grew a new personality for the war, and then lost it again? That hardly seems possible. What happened was that he got into a role during the war, in which he was able to use his capabilities to the full and to function with extraordinary competence and effectiveness...Did Churchill thus undergo a great personality change- absolutely not; what we see is the same person with great competence to cope with one role but not another. It is therefore no use asking whether a person is a great “leader.” The real question should be whether the person is a great manager, or a great commander, or a great political representative, or a great wartime president, or a great peacetime prime minister, or is great in any other role that carries leadership accountability”* (Jaques and Clement, 1997: 6 – 7).

The right way to go about this is first to define the required role, and then to look for a person who has the competencies to fill that role. That is why in their view it is so important to get the structure right, because it sets the roles and role relationships that specify the type of people that are needed to fill those roles and how they should behave towards one another. It is impossible to have effective managerial leadership if there is no clear managerial structure. Not only do you need a clear managerial structure, it has to function effectively. In an attempt to get structures to function more effectively some management theorists, as was mentioned previously, called for the end of hierarchies and the need for self-organized organizations (*heterarchy*). But as Wilber (1995) and Jaques and Clement (1997) have pointed out the problem is not with hierarchies per se, but with the pathology within the hierarchy or dysfunctional hierarchies. What Jaques and Clement (1997) found was that hierarchical structures are dysfunctional when the roles are not defined and designed correctly. What they discovered was that the level of work in any role can be objectively measured in terms of the target completion times for the longest assignment (tasks, programmes, projects) in that role. The longer the time to complete the task, the heavier the weight of responsibility and accountability. In other words the boundaries between successive managerial layers occur at certain specific time spans. *“Equivalent firm boundaries of real managerial layers were found to exist at time-spans of 3*

*months, 1 year, 2 years, 5 years, 10 years (and 20 years)...This regularity, which has so far appeared consistently in over 100 projects, points to the existence of a structure in depth, composed of true managerial layers with boundaries measured in time-span...” (Jaques and Clement, 1997:113).*

This discovery has made it possible to design hierarchical structures according to strata that make it possible to align the nature of task complexity and human nature and capability as represented in Figure 3.2. In other words, the true organizational layer at stratum - I coincides with the category B - I in task and cognitive complexity. So at stratum - I you need individuals who follow orders and do what they are told, they proceed along a prescribed linear pathway to a goal. At stratum III the task and complexity corresponds to category B - 3, here you need individuals, who can work with alternative serial plans. Stratum VI corresponds to Category C - 2 task complexity and here you need individuals that can handle the complexities involved with international trade. Here we can see that Jaques and Clement (1997) and Kolb (1984) are talking a similar language, it is Kolb's concept of “adaptive competencies.” According to Kolb (1984), each task or job requires a specific set of skills. The effective matching of task demands and personal skills is what Kolb (1984) calls “adaptive competence.” Hierarchies become dysfunctional when individuals are promoted into positions where the level of task complexity exceeds their cognitive ability to manage the task complexity involved.

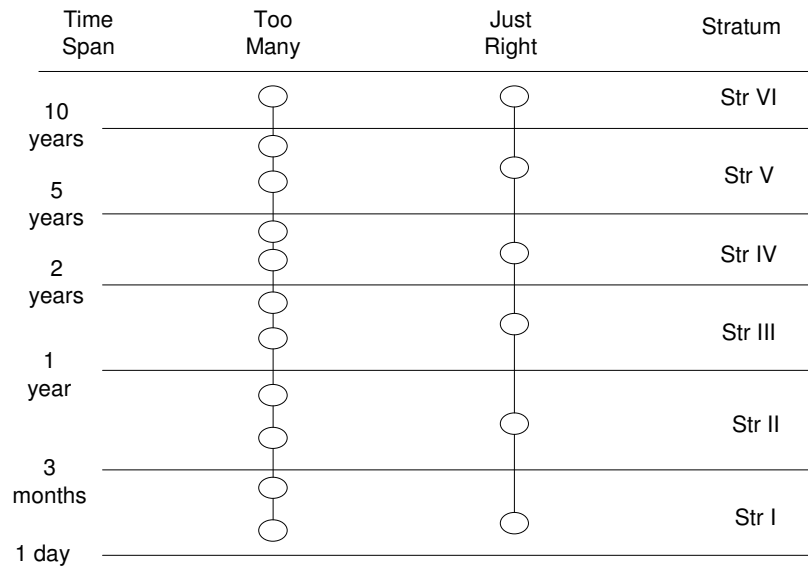


Figure 3.2. The underlying structure of organizational layers

Source: Jaques and Clement (1997: 115)

- In the absence of clearly defined business processes the organization experiences gridlock and output constraints. Lack of collaboration across boundaries and an inability to share information means that the organization cannot leverage best practices. This in turn results in long decision time frames and long innovation cycle times.
- If the metrics and the reward system do not support the goals it will result in internal competition. The end result is low standards, wrong results, frustration and high turnover and diffused energy.
- If people do not understand what they are meant to do or they are not empowered it will result in poor performance and low employee satisfaction. Rhem (1997) believes that there are six basic human needs that must be present for human beings to be productive; in fact he sees them as the foundation for designing effective organizations. In an unaligned organization these six criteria will be adversely affected or they will not be optimized which leads to lower productivity. The six psychological criteria for productive work are,

- Elbow room for decision-making. People need to know what their parameters are. The need to feel that they are their own bosses and that except in exceptional circumstances, they have room to make decisions that they can call their own. On the other hand they do not need so much elbow room that they do not know what to do.
- Opportunity to learn on the job and keep on learning. Learning is a basic human need and is only possible when people are able to set goals that are reasonable, challenging for themselves, and they get feedback of results in time to correct their behaviour. Without feedback no learning can take place.
- Variety. People need to vary their work to avoid extremes of fatigue and boredom. On the other hand, if people have so much variety due to much work they can become overwhelmed which leads to high levels of stress. This is a common problem in the modern workplace where the call is for people to continuously do more with less.
- Mutual support and respect. People need to get help and respect from their co-workers.
- Meaningfulness. Meaningfulness includes both the worth and the quality of a product, and having knowledge of the whole product and process. The more an individual can see the bigger picture or the bigger process, the more meaningful their work becomes.
- A desirable future. People need a job that leads them to a desirable future for themselves, not a dead-end. This desirable future is not necessarily a promotion, but a career path that will continue to allow for personal growth and increase in skills.

### **3.7 Architecting and designing the organisation**

Having defined the financial and customer objectives, executives have to design the appropriate organisation that will enable them to deliver on their strategy. Unlike the approach suggested by Galbraith et al. (2002) and Jaques and Clement (1997), which starts with designing the organisational structure first and then designing the appropriate business processes, the Balanced Scorecard approach starts with the

critical business processes first. So why start by designing the processes first? The business processes have to be designed to enable the chosen strategies to meet shareholder and customer expectations. If a company for example, has decided that they can better serve their customers by having a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) programme in place, they will have to design and build relationship management, knowledge management and solution development processes. Or if their customer strategy is to satisfy their clients by providing the best products on the market they will have to design and build market research, innovation management and product development processes. The art is to learn to identify the critical processes that will enable the chosen strategy and then to design and build them. Galbraith et al. (2002) point out that there are a number of processes that exist in any organisation, but there are typically only a few that are critical to the strategy and the organisation, and they usually involve multiple functions within the organisation to carry them out. These critical processes will in turn be supported by sub-processes. The problem for most organizations is that their current processes have usually evolved over time and hence they need to be reviewed and re-designed on an on-going basis.

Once the critical processes have been identified, defined, mapped and/or designed the required competencies can be defined, in terms of the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are required to make the processes work. Only then can the roles and responsibilities be defined as represented in Figure 3.3, and again it should take into account the design principles put out by Jaques and Clement (to align the nature of task complexity and human nature and capability) and Kolb's adaptive competencies (The effective matching of task demands and personal skills.)

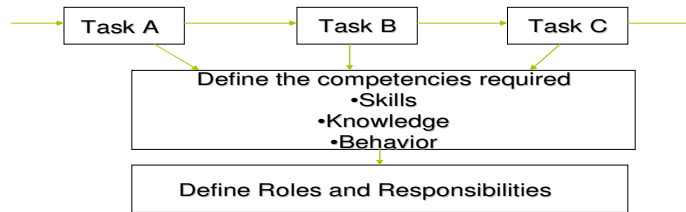


Figure 3.3. Designing the internal processes

Having designed the business process, defined the required competencies, roles and responsibilities, it now becomes possible to architect the appropriate organisation. The executives are then in a position to ask, “What is the appropriate Information Technology (IT) architecture that is required to support these processes?” But as Boar (1994) points out it is not about deciding on a single IT architecture, but the strategic ability to move across IT architectures. He points out that the debate around the demise of the mainframe and elevation of client / server is an incorrect debate. It is a tactical debate and not a strategic one, because the use of any singular architecture is tactical. The strategic move is the ability to move across various architectures as dictated by the ever-changing business needs and environment.

Having decided on the appropriate IT Architecture, executives then need to design the appropriate organisational structure that will support the strategic business processes. At the same time the executive must define and build desired leadership style, values and culture that the executive team wants to instil within the organisation. Finally, they need to design the kind of reward and remuneration system that will support the organisational architecture. The process is represented graphically in Figures 3.4.



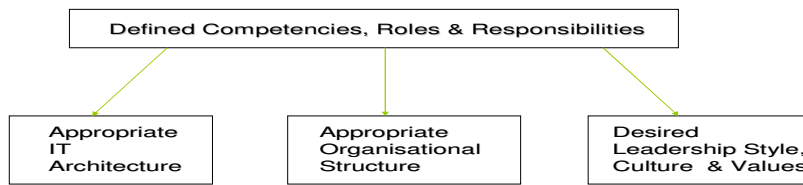


Figure 3.4. Architecting the organisation

In so doing, both the interior quadrant (desired leadership style, culture & values) and the exterior quadrant (business processes, competencies, organisational structure, and IT architecture) of the business context are taken into account.

### 3.8 Managerial complexity

Once again in theory and on paper the process is easy to explain. Most executives have no problem grasping the idea, concept of strategy formulation and organizational design. The problem, however, arises with the actual implementation. Why is it that so many companies and executives battle with the implementation or the actual doing of the design? An answer can be found in the work of Jaques and Clement (1997) on Stratified Systems Theory. According to them, the problem has to do with the level of complexity involved. The complexity is not in the formulation of the strategy, but in the implementation thereof. Furthermore, the complexity is compounded by the fact that the strategy has to be formulated and implemented within an ever-changing environment. It has to become real-time strategy, constantly responding to the changing demands of the market. And as Goldratt (1990) points out, even the best solutions, solutions and designs that worked in the past can actually become the next source of constraints. The problem is compounded further by the fact that many individuals tend to underestimate the level of complexity involved. Where complexity can be defined as, “...a function of the number of variables operating in a situation, the ambiguity of these variables, the rate at which they are changing, and the extent to

*which they are interwoven so that they have to be unravelled in order to be seen*” (Jaques and Clement, 1997. xvii). And these variables can be numerous and very elusive as Kilburg (2000) points out. He points out that there can be hundreds if not thousands of variables that contribute to the success or failure of an organization. Given that these variables interact in both observable and non observable ways, he argues that “true prediction and control are elusive.” In short, the reason that executives sometimes find it difficult to implement their designed strategies is because they get overwhelmed by the complexity involved with modern managerial leadership.

### **3.9 Individual Competencies**

Given the complexity of the business environment, what is it that the individual executive needs to do or have to function effectively within that environment? According to Jaques and Clement (1997) the following competencies are required to effectively manage the levels of complexity involved.

- **(CP):** Cognitive power (CP) is the potential strength of cognitive processes in an individual and it is therefore the maximum level of task complexity that the individual can handle at any given point in his or her development. CP is therefore the maximum number, ambiguity, rate of change, and interweaving of variables that an individual can process in a given period of time. It is therefore the necessary level of cognitive complexity required to manage the level of task complexity of the specific managerial role. Underpinning CP are the cognitive processes by means of which an individual is able to analyze, organize and synthesize information to make it available for doing work. Jaques and Cason found that it was possible to observe an individual’s pattern of mental processing, *“In simplest outline, we found that the pattern of people’s mental processing could be observed in the manner in which they organized their information, or arguments, in the course of an engrossed discussion or argument in which they were really concerned to set out their point of view and to make themselves perfectly clear to whomever might be listening”* (1994:30). Their research found that there are only four mental patterns or types of mental processes that individuals use. The four patterns are,

- Declarative processing: The individual explains their position by using a number of separate reasons. Each reason is seen as separate and no attempt is made to connect the reasons. They all stand alone and independent of each other. This processing has a declarative quality.
- Cumulative processing: The individual explains their position by bringing together a number of ideas. The individual ideas are insufficient to make the case, but taken together, they do. This processing has a pulling together quality.
- Serial processing: Here the individual builds up an argument through a sequence of reasons, each reason building on the other. Ultimately you end up with a chain of linked reasons.
- Parallel processing: Using serial processing, the individual explains their position by examining a number of other possible positions as well. The lines of thought are held in parallel and can be linked to each other. It involves working with various scenarios at the same time. This kind of processing has a conditional quality. Not only do the various scenarios link with each other, but they can condition each other.

By combining these observable thinking patterns with the observable levels of information complexity (concrete order, symbolic order, abstract conceptual order, and universal order) they were able to develop their categories of complexity of mental processing. Using these categories of mental processing they were able to define an individual's current potential capability (CPC) by observing and analyzing the mental processes being used. Based on their research they concluded inter-alia that the complexity of mental processing can be reliably observed by trained observers. The important thing is that this mental processing could be observed when subjects were engrossed in discussions that were of interest to them. From this they were able to observe the complexity of mental processing being used and make a valid judgment of their current potential. Interestingly enough these thinking processes were only observable when engrossed in discussion of subjects of interest to them. The discussions had to be of interest to the subjects, in other words the study had to take the subjects concrete experience into account. Having defined the field of interest the subjects got so involved that the researchers could observe their thinking processes. Be that as it may, Jaques

and Cason (1994) showed that it is possible to identify the amount of complexity any individual could handle at that point of their development by observing and analyzing their thinking processes. They concluded that there are categories of complexity of mental processes and that they mature over time. Individuals get totally overwhelmed by complexity when their cognitive power does not match the demanded level of task complexity. This could be due to the individual not having matured into the required cognitive complexity or they simply do not have what it takes. Cognitive power is therefore the most critical requirement to handle organizational complexity, but it is not the only criteria for success. The competencies listed below are just as important.

- **(V)** A strong sense of values for the required managerial work, and for the leadership of others. Even if an individual has the required cognitive complexity they must want to do the work at hand, that is they must value the work they are doing. Their personal values have to be aligned with the work they do so that their mental energy can be focused and unleashed. If people believe in what they are doing they have so much more energy to do the work. The converse is also true, even if the individual is a genius, if the work is no longer meaningful for that individual, mental and physical energy evaporates.
- **(K/S)** This is the appropriate knowledge, and skills to do the work. Having the appropriate skills and knowledge, however, is not enough. Jaques and Clement (1997) believe that the individual needs experienced practice in both. Furthermore, when it comes to executive-managerial leadership it is important to distinguish between technical, managerial and personal skills as represented in Figure 3.5.

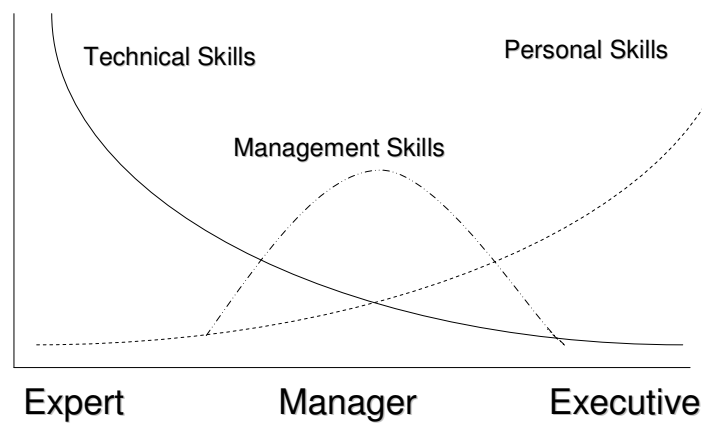


Figure 3.5. Evolution of managerial skills

Source: Adapted from Goldsmith, et al.(2000: 211)

Most individuals start their careers as some form of expert or professional in which they make use of their technical skills. As they move out of being functional or technical experts they move into management and have to learn managerial skills. If they happen to move into an executive position personal skills become more important than technical or managerial skills. Technical and management skills are task based skills, in that they are aimed at addressing a certain task at hand. These skills are usually learnt by making use of Kolb's (1984) prehension dimension of experiential learning. There is a task or a problem that needs to be solved or addressed (concrete experience). People are then trained in various theories or methods by means of abstract conceptualization on how to apply the theory to the concrete problem or task at hand. Traditionally this kind of learning has usually been done via what Beard and Wilson (2002) refer to as *provider-centered* as opposed to *learner-centered*. The differences between the two approaches are set out in Table 3.1. Traditionally provider-centered learning has been more aligned with classroom training and learning.

<b>Learner-centered</b>	<b>Provider-centered</b>
Providers work with the natural curiosity and concerns of the learner	Passive learning is encouraged
There is a learning contract	The provider has a rigid syllabus to get through
Real issues and problems are worked on and used as vehicles of learning	Trainees learn by memorizing, and use artificial case studies
Feedback on self-performance is encouraged	Learning is monitored, examined and assessed by trainer
Learners are considered to have a valuable contribution to make	The trainer is the repository of knowledge
Learners are trusted to learn for themselves	The teacher/trainer knows best
Responsibility for learning is shared with the learners	Trainees wait for the trainer to lead
The learning provider offers resources to learn	Learning is limited to the trainer's knowledge
Learners continually develop the programme	The trainer dictates the flow of the programme
Learners and providers have joint responsibility and power	The trainer has responsibility and power
There is a climate of genuine mutual care, concern and understanding	Trust is low; trainees need constant supervision, and the trainers remain detached
The focus is on fostering continuous learning, asking questions and the process of learning, and learning is at the pace of the learner	Knowledge is dispensed in measured chunks decided by the trainer
Emphasis is on promoting a climate for deeper, more impactful learning that affects life behaviour	Emphasis on here-and-now acquisition of knowledge and skills to do the job
There are no teachers, only learners	The teacher / trainer is, and remains, the expert

Table 3.1. A dichotomy of power and control

Source: Beard and Wilson (2002: 166)

Personal skills on the other hand are more environmental based skills. Here the skills involved are skills such as; flexibility, adaptability, intuition, and imagination. These types of skills are very difficult to learn in a classroom environment. In a sense these are the skills that an individual learns from their own experience and it is highly dependent on Kolb's (1984) transformation dimension of experiential learning, namely; reflective observation and active experimentation. It is the ability to develop and practice what Schön (1983) calls *reflection-in-action*. It is about reflecting and experimenting in a real-time environment. Schön does, however, distinguish between the Technical Rational

model of controlled experimenting and what he calls exploratory experimentation, *“In association with the model of controlled experiment, there is also the requirement for a particular kind of stance to inquiry. The experimenter is expected to adhere to norms of control, objectivity, and distance. By controlling the experimental process, he is to achieve objectivity, seeing to it that other inquirers who employ the same methods will achieve the same results. And to this end, he is expected to preserve his distance from experiential phenomena, keeping his biases and interests from affecting the object of study. Under the conditions of everyday professional practice the norms of controlled experiment are achievable only in a very limited way. The practitioner is usually unable to shield his experiments from the effects of confounding changes in the environment. The practice situation often changes very rapidly, and may change out from under the experiment. Variables are often locked into one another, so that the inquirer cannot separate them. The practice situation is often uncertain, in the sense that one doesn’t know what the variables are. And the very act of experimenting is often risky...In the most generic sense, to experiment is to act in order to see what the action leads to. The most fundamental question is, “What if?” When action is undertaken only to see what follows, without accompanying predictions and expectations, I shall call exploratory experiment...Exploratory experiment is the probing, playful activity by which we get a feel for things. It succeeds when it leads to the discovery of something there”* (1983: 144-145).

Reflection-in-action therefore makes use of exploratory experimentation to consider the consequences of various actions whilst one is within the process. Beard and Wilson (2002) argue that reflection-in-action (concurrent learning) as defined by Schön (1983) does not require the support of a teacher / mentor or coach because it happens spontaneously. Over the years the individual has learnt from his professional practice how to do this kind of reflection spontaneously. However, to rely on reflection-in-action only in order to develop deep learning could be dangerous. Beard and Wilson (2002) point out that due to time pressure and various constraints people often do not make the time to reflect on what is happening. Even Schön (1983) admits that in reality managers do reflect-in-action but they seldom reflect on their reflection-in-action. As a result their reflection-in-action tends to remain private and not accessible to others. Hence the call for

reflection-on-action (retrospective learning) by Beard and Wilson (2002) which involves the individual thinking about their previous experience, analyzing it and developing their own personal theories of action. (The difference between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action are set out in Table 3.2.) It is especially in the domain of reflection-on-action that coaching can play an important role to facilitate the development of environmental based skills. In so doing coaching is more aligned with the concept of *Learner-centered learning*.

<b>Coached Reflection (Reflection-on-Action)</b>	<b>Reflection-in-action</b>
Planned intervention to support learning from experience	Spontaneous reflection that occurs as a result of a need to understand and respond to experience
Learner(s) supported by a facilitator	Learner(s) organize reflection themselves
Is planned for specific times	Can occur at any time but usually when understanding of the circumstances is necessary and when time is available
Usually happens with learner(s) away from the immediate workplace	Usually happens in the workplace
Involves contemplation	Reflection is an active process

Table 3.2. Reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action

Source: Beard and Wilson (2002: 198)

- **(Wi)** The necessary wisdom about people and things. Jaques and Clement (1997) believe that wisdom has to do with the soundness of an individual's judgments about the world and people. It is the ability to make good judgments about people and how they are likely to react in various situations. Sensitivity and empathy are central to wisdom which expresses itself in tact. Given that this is a developmental model, wisdom is something that can develop and mature with age. That does not automatically mean that all old people are wise. What it does raise is the interesting dynamic of innovation versus wisdom. In the heyday of the dotcoms, "conventional wisdom" suggested that organizations get rid of the older, wiser members in order to make way for the young innovators. The problem was that many of these innovators did not have the wisdom (lack of experience) to manage a large complex organization through its various life cycles. The reality is that large complex organizations need both wisdom and innovation to be sustainable. Theory without practical experience is not enough. It is very true that in this



regard experience is a good teacher, in that it teaches new skills and how to improve existing skills. However, when it comes to wisdom, experience on its own is not enough. Jaques and Clement (1997) point out that wisdom needs both concrete experience and abstract conceptualization. They believe that action without sound theory and concepts is unproductive, because it distorts our experience and narrows our vision. Theories and concepts determine what we see and what we learn from our own experience. Therefore the acquisition of wisdom involves Kolb's (1984) prehension dimension of experiential learning.

- **T and (-T).** T is the attempt to define leadership qualities and traits and (-T) is the absence of abnormal temperamental or emotional characteristics in an individual that disrupt their ability to work with others. According to Jaques and Clement the focus upon personality qualities or traits is misguided. *“The main point is that the particular pattern of qualities that constitutes emotional make-up has little effect upon that person's in-role leadership work, unless those qualities are at unacceptable or abnormal extremes and the individual lacks the self-control to keep them from disturbing his or her work and working relationships with other.”*(Jaques and Clement, 1997: 79). This is a very valuable insight that Jaques and Clement has brought into the business world. Sadly many so called “coaches” have built a practice by purely focusing and working with the (-T) factor. Unfortunately due to pure ignorance many individuals who sell themselves as executive coaches are in fact not coaches but psychologists who are still practicing therapy under another name. And why not, why should you be paid medical aid rates when you can just change your title from therapist to coach and charge substantially more? Peltier (2001) points out that there is a difference between coaching and therapy as put out in Tale 3.3. He goes on to warn that the transition from therapy to executive coaching can be difficult and open to failure. Any therapist, in his opinion, that does not have significant knowledge of the business world, its bottom-line orientation and its assumptions is destined to fail.

<b>Therapy</b>	<b>Coaching</b>
Focus on the past	Present and future focus
Passive orientation (listening), reflective	Action orientation
Data from client	Data is information from key others, as well as from the client
Pathology orientation	Growth or skill development orientation
Problem is intrapsychic (found in the person)	Problem is found in person –environment mix
Information is not shared with others	Information sometimes behaviour to key members of organization (with great care)
Client is clearly the person you work with	Definition of “client” unclear (may be the organization that is paying coach’s fees)
Client (person) must feel enriched	Organization must feel enhanced by the coaching
Confidentiality is clear and absolute	Confidentiality is complex
50-minute sessions	Meetings of variable lengths
Work in therapist’s office	Meet in executive’s workplace or a “neutral” site
Rigid boundaries	Flexible boundaries, including social setting
Work through (resolve) personality issues	Work around personality issues
Client or HMO chooses therapist	Organization may choose coach

Table 3.3. Differentiating coaching from therapy

Source. Peltier (2001: xxvii)

Therapeutic issues might be raised in the coaching environment, but then the client should be referred for therapy. Coaching as Peltier (2001) points out, is growth or skill development orientated it is not pathology orientated. Referring to when managers act as coaches, Jaques and Clement (1997) sees no problem in helping the individual smooth out some rough edges in their temperament, but it is not the coach or the manager’s role to try and change the individual’s personality. If the coach is a qualified psychologist, they will be able to deal with the problem, if not the coach has no option but to refer the client for therapy. If the coach on the other hand only works with (-T), it is therapy and not coaching. Coaching is orientated towards personal and skills development.

Peltier (2001) raises another interesting difference between therapy and coaching namely; that therapy assumes that the problem is intrapsychic (found in the person) whereas coaching assumes that the problem is found in the person-environment mix. This is a very important insight. When a coach is called in to work with the

so called “abnormal temperamental or emotional characteristics” of an individual, the question needs to be asked whether the manifested behaviour is really as a result of a “flaw” within the individual or does the behaviour stem from the structural design of the organization? An example of this dynamic was when the author was called in to help coach an individual who had been identified as having an “abnormal temperamental issue”. This executive was continually clashing with another executive in the company and it was seen as affecting the morale of the entire organization. As we started to work on the issue, it was discovered that these executives had actually worked together before, and that previously they had had enormous respect for each other’s capabilities. The problem started when the “problem” executive supported the appointment of the other executive into a new role. The symptom was that the two executives could not get along anymore, in fact it was an all-out psychological war. The real problem however, was that one executive’ bonus was based on just-in-time production while the “problem” executive’s bonus was based on maximum sales. To maximize his bonus at the end of the year the production executive closed the production plant in mid December to ensure that there was no inventory at the end of the year. By doing that, he maximized his bonus. The other executive could never maximize his bonus, because for the first two months of the next financial year there was no stock to sell. The problem was not with the individuals involved, but with the way the organization was designed and in the way the reward system actually worked against the organization.

Oshry (1999) spent his whole life studying organizations and the actual behaviours that the system produces. What Oshry (1999) found was that all organizational systems consist of three types of systems, namely; Tops, Middles and Bottoms and that there are predictable systemic behavioural patterns associated with these three types, irrespective of the individuals involved. In this context only the Tops and Middles will be dealt with as executive coaching is normally only aimed at these strata. Tops are collectively responsible for the whole system, and these members are regularly confronted with complex, difficult, and unpredictable issues with long time horizons. The predictable, cognitive and affective themes of the Top system include,

- Fear: They all experience some degree of fear. The question is, do they deal with it or run away?
- Homogenisation and differentiation: They either share responsibility, information or decide together (homogenize) or they protect their own turf (differentiate).
- Differentiation on direction: Tops have differences with regard to what direction the whole should take. Possible behaviours associated with this dynamic are; endless bickering, sabotage, avoidance and submergence.

These behaviours are recognized in all organizations, they are universal to executive teams. Given that most organizations are still designed according to functions instead of across business processes it is not surprising that members of the Middle system are pulled apart from one another, out towards other individuals or groups. The predictable cognitive and affective themes of the Middle system include;

- Systemic dis-integration: Ideally members should support one another in the service of a common mission, purpose, or function. However, given the functional design structures, middles spend the bulk of their time handling their individual business and little or no time supporting one another. There is no incentive for them to support each other. Often middles are in competition with each other. Who needs to worry about external competition when we design competition into our own organisations?
- Personal dis-integration: According to Oshry (1999), if you are not confused as a Middle you are not paying attention. Middles are being pulled between two very different and conflicting systems (Tops and Bottoms), and there is legitimacy in both systems. Middles can never fully satisfy anyone and therefore it is easy for them to internalise their dissatisfactions and consider themselves incompetent.
- Multiplier effect: In the absence of supportive system membership, each Middle faces these pressures, confusions, and self-doubts alone. If Middles try to stay stuck in the middle, their mental health will suffer. They have no option but to choose sides. The question is, “Who do I support, the Tops or the Bottoms?” These are usually the most stressed out people in the organisation.

The challenge with executive coaching will always be to work out whether it is an individual problem (intrapsychic), a systemic design problem or a combination of both. Oshry's (1999) work has shown that a system creates its own behavioural patterns irrespective of the individuals involved. Yes at times the behavioural problem can be limited to the individual (intrapsychic). At the same time it is possible that the behaviour is as a result of the system and the way the organization has been designed. If that is the case, it would be more appropriate to change the system, or at the very least change our relationship to the system. *"Instead of fixing ourselves, we might do better to focus on changing the system by changing our relationship to it. Our feelings of anxiety, anger, frustration, or powerlessness are often clues to the condition of our systems. Instead of fixing or calming ourselves through therapy, drugs, or alcohol, we need to change our system by changing our relationships to them"* (Oshry, 1999: 9).

Hence, Peltier's (2001) point that in executive coaching the problem is usually found in a person–environment mix. One coaching model that really understands this concept of person-environment mix is the Systems and Psychodynamics Model developed by Kilburg (2000). The key elements of the Systems and Psychodynamics Model are presented in Table 3.4.

<b>Psychodynamic elements</b>	<b>Systems elements</b>
Rational self (Freud's concept of ego)	System structure(s)
Instinctual self (Freud's concept of id)	System process(es)
Conscience (Freud's concept of superego)	System content(s)
Internalized self (Freud's concept of ego ideal)	Input elements
Conflict	Throughput elements
Defence	Output elements
Emotion	
Cognition	
Past relationship(s)	
Present relationship(s)	
Focal relationship(s)	

Table 3.4. Key elements of Psychodynamic and Systems Models.

Source: Adapted from Kilburg (2000:23)

The systems elements include the structural elements of the system which range from tasks to be done to the roles and jobs that individuals do. For Kilburg (2000) it includes the traditional elements like hierarchy, departments, degree of centralization or decentralization, and the characteristics of the organizational environment, mission, values and culture of the organization. In his model the key elements of the organizational processes are contained in the input-throughput-output matrix and include things like; life cycles of products, change, resource acquisition and allocation, human resource processes, control processes, information systems, motivation, communication, goal setting, decision making, followership and leadership. At the same time it takes into account the key elements of the content of organizational systems like; research and development, general management, transportation, engineering, manufacturing, marketing, logistics, procurement, finance and safety. In so doing Kilburg (2000) is very thorough in his approach and covers both the bottom Left and Right Quadrants of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. The system focus allows the coach to

structure what could be almost incomprehensible, as many of these structures can either be formal or informal.

The psychodynamic aspect of the model provides complex explanations for the motivation of individuals and groups. Kilburg's (2000) model incorporates the major psychological substructures identified by Sigmund Freud. He refers to the ego as the rational self, the id as the instinctual self, the superego as the conscience and the ego ideal as the idealized or internalized self. According to classical psychodynamic theory these structures exist within the mind of every individual and that their organizing principles and functions are different. The instinctual self is organized around the pleasure principle and its main goals are gratification and reduction of the pressure produced from biologically based drives and psychological and social needs. The rational self is organized around the reality principle and its goal is the survival of the individual in biological, social and psychological terms. It helps the person adapt to their environment. The conscience is organized around the moral principle and its goal is to help the individual maintain social order and cohesion in their world. The idealized self contains the conscious and unconscious fantasies concerning how the individual would like to be experienced by others. It provides a model of how the individual should behave and live. Based on the organization principles and their various goals it is easy to see how the various internal structures can be in conflict with each other. More importantly these conflicts can occur at the conscious or unconscious level which adds to the complexity of any situation. *"The contents or issues of conflict can be varied and complex, ranging from external dangers to internal wishes, demands, emotions, mastery issues, achievement, attachment, separation,, control, values and change. The four psychological structures, following their own goals and organizational principles, can each adopt different positions on these issues leading to major problems in the individual's efforts to manage in the external or his or her internal world"* (Kilburg, 2002:32).

This conscious or unconscious conflict can give rise to a host of different psychological defences which include; denial, splitting, delusional projection,

fantasy, projection, passive-aggressive behaviour, dissociation, intellectualization, repression, detachment, sublimation, altruism, suppression, games, rituals and cognitive distortions. Add to that the complex and varied patterns that are expressed in and through the different social relationships that people are engaged in on a daily basis, especially their roles and relationships at work, and you have a very complex conscious and unconscious environment of various motives for individuals and groups.

The strength of the Systems and Psychodynamic model is that it sees the psychodynamic and systems approaches as complementary in helping to understand the personal-environment mix. *“Both general systems and psychodynamic theory have strengths and weaknesses. However, in my view, they are complementary. Systems theory is useful for its abstractness, general utility and applicability, assistance in organizational and large system assessments, and allowance for prediction and control in some situations. It is not particularly useful in helping people with the content of what is happening internally, or when they find themselves in conflict or problematic situations. In my experience, psychodynamic theory picks up where systems theory leaves off. It is useful in explaining and guiding individual’s behaviour, both internally and interpersonally. It provides useful information about the human side of organizational behaviour, but it is not inclusive enough to assist a consultant or coach with the thorough assessment of diagnosis of organizational operations or human behaviour. It also lacks specificity in helping clients develop and implement new and innovative behaviours for themselves, their groups, or their organizations”* (Kilburg, 2000:46). It is therefore not surprising that Kilburg (2000) believes that executive coaching is evolving as a sub-discipline of organizational development. It is not psychotherapy in the workplace.

Jaques and Clement (1997) conclude that effective managerial leadership in highly complex environments demands four basic conditions. Firstly, the individual must have the necessary level of cognitive competence to carry the required role and they must strongly value the work and responsibility associated with that role. In a sense



this addresses the interpersonal requirements. Secondly, the individual must be free from any severely debilitating psychological traits that interfere with their ability to work with others. This is a combination of interpersonal and intrapersonal requirements. The third is what they call organizational conditions. That is, the appropriate business processes, organizational structures and specified managerial leadership practices must be in place. These are the systemic requirements. Fourthly, each individual must be encouraged to use their own leadership style; they must be free to be themselves. There is no “magical leadership” style out there that works for everybody. Every individual is unique and every individual has their own leadership style, depending on their specific competencies and the specified role they fulfil.

### **3.10 Executive Coaching Defined**

The executive coaching intervention should therefore be aimed at working with CP, V, K/S and Wi within the system that the individual operates. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, executive coaching is therefore about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development with the aim of improving individual and organizational performance. It is not therapy. It is integrated in that it caters for the Four Fields of Knowledge in the Four Quadrants, and it allows for development through various levels of consciousness, especially in the personal and transpersonal levels. It is experiential learning in that it uses Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning model as the injunction via Learning Conversations.

### **3.11 Summary**

This chapter dealt with how the model was refined and sold to T-Systems. It then took the theoretical Integrative Experiential Coaching Model and added a business context to it. This was done by incorporating strategy formulation via the Balanced Scorecard of Kaplan and Norton (1996) and organisational design principles, with reference to the work of Galbraith et al. (2002) and Rehm (1997). All of this has to happen in a world of managerial complexity which can overwhelm executives. Having set the business context, the chapter then explored the individual leadership competencies of

Jaques and Clement (1997) and how those competencies could help an executive cope with managerial complexity. What became clear is that within the business context, coaching is not therapy. Using the work of Peltier (2001) a clear distinction was made between coaching and therapy. Lastly, referring to the work of Oshery (1999) and Kilburg (2000) it was shown that behavioural problems manifested by individuals within an organisation could be intrapsychic or due to systemic organisational design problems or even a combination of both. Hence it is argued that an executive coaching intervention should be aimed at working with CP, V, K/S and Wi within the system that the individual operates. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, executive coaching is therefore about facilitating integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development with the aim of improving individual and organizational performance. It is not therapy.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Research Design and Methodology**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter will start by setting the organisational context in which the research project took place. It then mentions how the ethical and legal issues were dealt with. It then explains how the coaching process worked and gives an example of how the Integrated Experiential coaching Model was implemented in practice. Having set the overall context, it moves into how the research was designed and how the research methodology was chosen. This involves the selection of the co-researchers and how the data for the research was collected. It then goes on to describe how the data was analysed and processed.

#### **4.2 Organisational context**

Early in 2003 I presented the PowerPoint presentation of the Integrative Experiential Coaching Model to Mardia van der Walt Korsten, the General Manager of Human Resources, as requested by Arrie Redelinghuis. Mardia liked what was presented to her and agreed to have seventeen people partake in a six-month pilot-coaching project within T-Systems South Africa. At the same time I suggested to Mardia that we use the pilot project as part of my doctoral research project. The advantage for the company would be that the whole project would have to be of such a high standard that it could withstand the vigour of academic standards and procedures. Given that a high academic standard would be demanded, she felt even more comfortable with going ahead with the project.

The organisation is an IT outsourcing company that specialises in large complex mainframe, network and server contracts. T-Systems South Africa is a subsidiary of T-Systems International, the IT division of Deutsche Telecom. The South African

subsidiary came into existence about four years ago and has a very interesting history. It was formed with the merger of Info Plan; the IT division of the old South African Defence Force, and Daimler Chrysler's IT Infrastructure division. Shortly after this, the company landed one of the biggest outsource contracts in South Africa. It won a five-year contract to manage the mainframe, network, servers and desktops for Sanlam Life, the second largest Life Office in South Africa. As part of that contract it inherited all the relevant IT staff from Sanlam. Shortly after winning this contract, the company was bought by Deutsche Telecom and became T-Systems South Africa. In the years that followed it won three more major contracts. In the first four years its growth was substantial but has subsequently slowed.

The nature of the work that this company specialises in - IT integration and outsourcing - is very complex. IT technology is a fast changing and dynamic environment. Initially companies outsourced these IT functions with the hope of managing their IT costs better. It was hoped that the economies of scale would provide better pricing. Initially it was easy to get the economies of scale. As the contracts matured this has become more difficult, demanding more and more innovation from the company. At the same time, clients were expecting more and more innovation from the company to help them solve more and more complex business problems. This in itself makes the business complex enough, but it is compounded by the fact that they had to collaborate with a number of vendors and other outsourcers who work in the same companies. There is no doubt that technically this is a very complex business, with projects that can span a number of years. This is a challenge for any business.

Given its history, however, the company faced some other complexities. The executive realised that they had not managed the cultural issues as effectively as they should have. Effectively there were a number of cultural complexities at work within the organisation. There were, and still is, a number of subcultures within the organisation. Sanlam was by far the biggest contract, and as a result a number of Sanlam staff became a part of the company. The Sanlam culture was very hierarchical and paternalistic. Given this, the challenge had been to change that into a more entrepreneurial culture instead of a mutual life society culture. On the other hand, the old Info Plan culture was very innovative and these people were used to breaking rules

all the time. Not surprising, given that these are the people who ran the old defence force IT-Systems very successfully during the sanction years of apartheid. Add to that, the fact that a number of the executive team are German expatriates, who have their own subculture. The problem was that managers within the company tended to get overwhelmed by the complexity involved.

It is in this context, that Mardia was interested in exploring executive coaching as a means of developing their management and leadership's ability to better manage the complexities involved. It was hoped that coaching could help to integrate these issues within the minds of the managers and the leadership of the company.

#### **4.3 Ethical and legal considerations**

I was awarded the contract to coach seventeen middle and senior managers for a period of six months. The project ran from July 2003 to December 2003. I contracted to meet with every coachee for twelve sessions over the six-month period. The coaching sessions were usually of two-hour duration every two weeks. The model is based on experiential learning and participants need the time in between sessions to experiment with and assimilate their learning.

The project involved coaching in both Cape Town and Johannesburg. The managers were chosen by the company because I was told that the company believed that they would be the next generation of leaders. The company wanted these managers to be coached for development and performance improvement. None of the managers for this project were selected for remedial coaching which usually involves working with specific behavioural problems that are best addressed through therapy. So from the outset I was working with a group of people that the company believed in. (Although as soon as I started the coaching I found out that that was not always the case. Some managers were hoping that I could change the coachees through coaching.)

Mardia van der Walt Korsten the General Manager for Human Resources was the sponsor. The project received the go ahead from the full Executive Committee of T-

Systems South Africa. All costs associated with travel and accommodation was carried by the client. Due to the fact that this project involved a reasonable sum of money, the company requested that each coachee sign a contract committing themselves to the company for a period of three months after the termination of the coaching engagement. Once again, all coachees were happy to comply with this request from their company.

A confidential agreement was written into the contract. In this contract I as the coach contracted to keep any information provided to me as confidential. This confidential agreement applied on two levels. Firstly, given that I was to coach so many people who occupied various positions within the organisation it was obvious that I would get exposure to the strategic plans and the operations of the organisation. The company therefore had to know and have the assurance that that kind of information would be kept strictly confidential. Secondly, the coachees had to know that any information they shared with me would be treated as highly confidential. This was critical to the success of the project. This was the first time that coaching was to be undertaken within the organisation and even though the coachees were told repeatedly that they were chosen because the company saw them as the future leaders, there was still a large element of scepticism and distrust about the coaching intervention. Thankfully this agreement was written into the contract, for as I was to find out later a number of the coachees believed that they were put on the program because they were targeted as the trouble makers in the organisation. It was therefore agreed with the company and the coachees that all the work done within the coaching sessions would remain strictly confidential between the coach and the coachees. Although, all agreed that if the coachee agreed I could give feedback on trends to the coachees immediate manager if they asked for that kind of feedback. If any feedback was to be given I would first discuss it with the coachee to see if he or she was happy with what would be discussed and then ask them for permission to give the feedback. At times I was put under pressure by some executives and managers to give specific and detailed feedback. I refused to do this on the basis that it would compromise my position as a coach and violate the confidentiality agreement that was agreed too with each coachee and the company as a whole.

At the start of the project I met with every coachee and gave him or her a presentation on the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and on how I worked within that theoretical framework. Each coachee was then invited to work with me if they were happy with the content and context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and the way in which I planned to coach. If not, they had the option of choosing an alternative coach. Thereafter, the coachees were asked whether they would be happy to be part of the doctoral research project. They were welcome to decline. Every member consented to be a part of the research project.

The other issue that had to be addressed was the fact that I would be an insider researcher which could have an impact on my objectivity. To address this issue Mardia (who is a registered clinical psychologist and who understands the importance of supervision) introduced me to Professor Frans Cilliers. Frans, a highly respected academic and practitioner in South Africa, is head of research at the Department of Industrial Psychology at the University of South Africa (UNISA) the largest university in the country. Frans had had a long standing working relationship with T-Systems and was and is highly respected in the company. Mardia suggested that I do some supervision with him and even asked whether it was possible to involve Frans in the supervision of the research project. Frans and I met and he liked what I was doing and indicated that he would be very willing to help with the research and coaching supervision if it was at all possible. At this time I even considered leaving this programme and registering at UNISA for a PhD. When I discussed the issue with Professor David Lane, David convinced me to stay on the programme and organised for Frans to become my academic supervisor. From then on Frans and I met at least once a month for academic and coaching supervision. I believe that this enabled me to stay more objective throughout the project. Mardia was very happy with the development and both she and Frans signed off my ethics release form for DPS 4521 in December 2003.

Given the respect that Frans has within the company and his academic reputation, Frans, Mardia and I agreed that the research results would only be released to the company once the final project had been written up and passed by the University of

Middlesex. This made Frans and I very comfortable because we both have a reputation of only delivering high quality work.

#### 4.4 Implementation of the coaching process and the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model

The process that was followed is represented in figure 4.1.

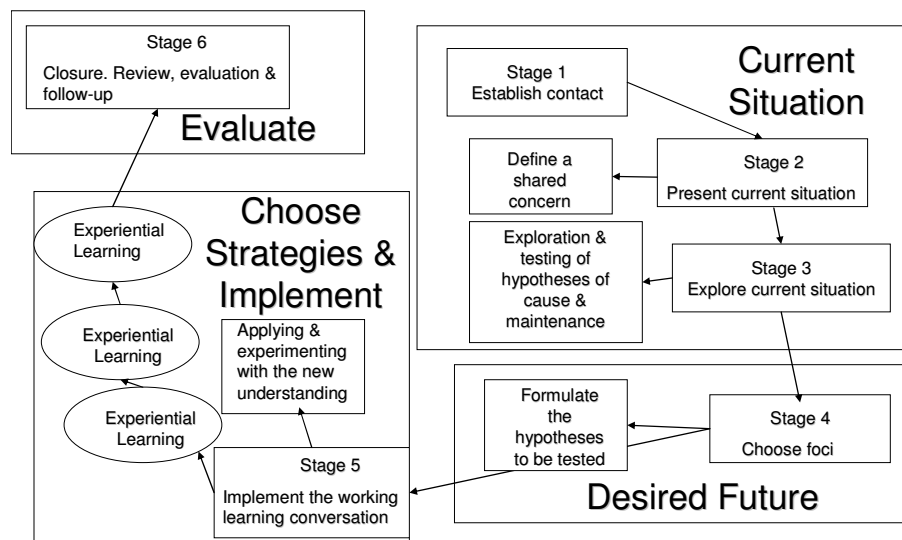


Figure 4.1. Stages in the Coaching Relationship.

Source: Adapted from. Kilburg (2000:81)

Stage one involved establishing contact with the coachees. The first sessions started in July 2003 and consisted of a one hour meeting with each coachee, their immediate manager, the psychologist who administered the assessment centres, a representative from human resources and the coach. The psychologist highlighted the areas that he felt were development areas. Both the coachee and their manager were free to agree or disagree with the assessment. The coachees immediate manager was then asked to raise any development issues that they felt needed to be addressed. From the outset, it was made very clear to all coachees that this information was to be used as input as



they themselves saw fit. They were free to use this information and work with it or to disregard it, the reason being that the coachee always sets the agenda in the Integrated Experiential Coaching framework. Given that the model aims to move responsibility and accountability for personal development onto the individual being coached, they had to realise from the beginning that it was their time and their development that was at stake, they chose how and when or what they wanted to work on. The coach, psychologist or their manager does not set the learning agenda. The learning agenda remains the responsibility of the person being coached. At the end of this session each coachee was given a Learning Styles Inventory questionnaire as well as the Learning Styles Inventory Interpretation (refer to Appendix 2). They were asked to complete the questionnaire and bring it with them to the next session.

Stage two involved presenting the current situation. The second coaching session was designed for the coach and coachee to get to know each other better, with the aim of arriving at a contracted piece of work based on a shared concern. It was important that both parties defined a shared concern; if no shared concern could be defined it would have been better for me as the coach to walk away from the situation. As the coach I had to be interested in the issue at hand; if not, the coaching relationship would have been doomed from the start. More importantly the coachee had to feel comfortable working with me. As a result I gave each coachee an hour presentation on the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and on how I work. At the end of that presentation I asked the coachee if they felt comfortable to work within that framework or not. If they did, we could continue the coaching process. If they did not they were welcome to withdraw from the process and the company would allocate them a coach they felt comfortable with. Every coachee elected to continue working with me as they felt comfortable with the coaching model. I then asked the coachee to share their life story; from as far back as they could remember. At certain points of interest I asked some questions to explore the issue even further. Once the coachee finished telling their story they were free to hear my life story if they so wished. Every coachee asked to hear my life story. I found that self disclosure through story telling did help to reduce the initial stress for both the coachee and I, in that it helped us to get things out in the open which in turn had a cathartic effect. It helped to facilitate relationship building between the coachee and I. It made us realise that we are all only human and that deep down we are not as different as we often think we are. Finally we both

shared our preferred learning styles with each other and discussed how our preferred learning styles could possibly impact the way we work together. Furthermore, it gave me an indication of how each coachee prefers to learn.

In stages three and four the coachee and I started to explore the current situation even further. Here we tried to screen or choose possible problems, issues and / or opportunities that the coachee wanted to work on. In so doing we tried to identify a working hypothesis something we could experiment and play with. And I want to emphasise that it was a working hypothesis because at the time it was the most obvious leveraged problem and / or opportunity to choose to work with. There was the realisation that the hypothesis might change over time and hence it was an open-ended experiment. Once the coachee had identified what it was that they wanted to work on in coaching we recorded it as detailed as possible under the “What is my Purpose?” in a Personal Learning Contract (Refer to Appendix 3). We then tried to define measures that would be used to measure whether we had achieved that goal at the end of the six months period. These were recorded under the “How shall I judge and measure my success?” in the Personal Learning Contract.

Stage five involved the implementation of a number of Learning Conversations (coaching sessions) for the specified contractual period. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching model, each Learning Conversation was followed by a two week break where the coachee had to go and experiment and apply what they had explored in the coaching session. Sessions generally lasted for two hours. How a typical coaching session was implemented is best illustrated by means of a case example which is presented in section 4.3.1.

The final stage was closure and review. Here the coach and coachee reviewed the process and decided on whether to renew the contract or to terminate the coaching relationship. To bring this part of the coaching relationship to closure, each coachee was asked whether they would like to continue participating in the doctoral research program or not. If they did want to, they were asked to write a reflective essay about what they had learnt from the coaching experience. The reason for doing this was twofold; it was helpful in bringing final closure to the learning experience and the coaching relationship and it further enhanced the ability of the client to reflect on their

actions and their own learning. Secondly, these essays would be used as the primary data source to conduct the actual research.

#### **4.4.1 Case example of how the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model was implemented.**

The first thing that needs to be emphasised is how I used the four quadrant multilevel part of the model. The four quadrant model is the perceptual map that I as the coach used to try and make sense of the reality that was presented to me by the coachee. It was the tool that I used to try and make sense of or manage the complexities involved with working with the person and the situation. So for example, if the coachee said to me that they needed help in formulating their strategy for their division or department. In my mind I would see that as being in the social system domain that includes the natural and human made systems like technology, processes and structures. It was an activity that fitted into the rational level of the Lower-Right Quadrant and as such it could be measured. It meant that we would be working with something that was relatively easy to measure and the sessions could be structured more easily in that we could use a tool like the Balanced Scorecard for example. Alternatively if the coachee said to me that they needed help with time management, in my mind I would see that as fitting into the rational level of the Upper-Right Quadrant, the individual's exterior domain. Once again it would be a piece of work that could be reasonably well structured and measured. For example, we could use a tool like Covey's priority grid and logically help the coachee to prioritize all their activities and time. So the measure could be as simple as; prior to coaching I could not manage my time and activities effectively, after six months of coaching however a noticeable improvement was visible or not. If on the other hand the coachee said to me that they needed help with defining a purpose for their lives, I immediately knew that the coaching sessions would be less structured and fuzzy because we would be dealing with the world of inner experience and consciousness, the Upper-Left Quadrant. Being an existential issue it meant that we would be working with the upper rational level of consciousness and starting to touch on the transpersonal levels of consciousness. Here the coaching would involve more exploration and the use of dialogue and the outcomes could be more difficult to measure. The "mapping" of the type and level of work in my mind paradoxically gave me a sense of security and ease which helped me to relax and be

more present to the clients needs. It helped me to simplify the complexity in my mind. Naturally as the session progressed this hypothesis testing would be going on in my mind all the time and I would continuously test it with the client.

The coaching sessions themselves involved me facilitating an experiential learning experience for the client which is best illustrated by means of the following actual case. At the first initial meeting the coachee's immediate manager had raised some concerns that despite having run a very successful business over the years he was starting to see some crack appearing in the business that the coachee was responsible for. He was concerned about the quality and sustainability of the annuity income side of the business, (the problem was manifesting in the Lower-Right Quadrant). In the managers opinion the coachee was not as hands on in the business as he used to be and he wanted to see the coachee take more responsibility for the business and get more hands on again. In the manager's mind, the cause of the problem originated in the Upper-Right Quadrant and that is where he wanted the "problem" to be fixed.

When the coachee and I explored what he would like to achieve from coaching he mentioned that he needed help in defining his life's purpose (this was clearly an issue related to the Upper-Left Quadrant). He wanted to discover what his real purpose in life was; he felt that somewhere along the way he had lost the meaning of life. He mentioned that he was not so excited about his work anymore. A few years back he used to enjoy getting out of bed and coming to work. Now he found it an effort to come to work. He was starting to question whether he was in the right job and whether it was not time for him to make a change. But given that he was a married man with two children (and the affirmative action in South Africa) he wanted to make sure what his purpose was before he made any radical career changes. He mentioned that since he completed his MBA asset management seemed to be an attractive alternative. These were the issues he was wrestling with; this was his Concrete Experience, the reality that he was living with.

Having discussed this for some time, we moved into Reflective Observation. I asked him why he thought that things had changed for him. His response was that he honestly did not know. So we started to reflect on his work and life experience. From the reflection it became very clear that this was a very bright and successful individual.

For example, he completed his masters thesis in electronic engineering at the same time as his MBA degree. He had an immaculate career track record, having already made a change from the electronic defence industry where he was involved in designing guidance systems for missiles to a highly successful career in information technology. He was in his forties happily married, living in a good house but he could not work out why he was so discontent. As we explored these issues he realised that there were some aspects of his current job that he still enjoyed but some that he absolutely hated. But he could not put his finger on his discontent and on why he was losing interest.

He then asked me what I thought was going on with him. Was he abnormal? I suggested that there was a strong possibility that he was starting to experience what is commonly known as an existential crises and that it was very common for successful people at his age to go through this crises. I explained to him that it was a normal developmental process and that he could be starting to make the transition into the transpersonal realms of human development. I also explained a bit of Victor Frankl's Logo Therapy to him and on how discovering our meaning in life gets us through the existential crises. Immediately he saw how his search for purpose fitted into this theory. In so doing he realised that he was not abnormal and that this was just a part of normal human development. The conversation had moved into the Abstract Conceptualisation aspect of experiential learning. Some theoretical input was interjected into the conversation which helped the coachee to better understand his current predicament.

We then explored some options that he could experiment and play with to help facilitate the process of discovering his purpose in life. The option that appealed to him the most was to start keeping a reflective journal where he would reflect on those parts of his job that he found meaningful and energising. I encourage him to especially monitor his feelings and energy levels, which parts of his job excited and gave him energy and which parts drained him of energy. Using the personal Learning Contract we then contracted that he would experiment with this approach for a specified time. He then went and did that which effectively took him into Active Experimentation of experiential learning. In so doing we were using a Upper-Right Quadrant activity,

writing and journaling, to help him discover and explore a Upper-Left Quadrant dilemma; namely the search for purpose and meaning in life.

Interestingly enough, this is a good case example to have used, because it raised the first of a number of contradictions I was to encounter between my theoretical model and my actual practice. I had emphatically stated that this model was not about therapy, yet Logo Therapy is a form of therapy and the coachee had found it very helpful. So obviously I could no longer be so emphatic about the model not being about therapy. These contradictions will be dealt with in chapter six.

#### **4.5 Research design**

The initial idea was to develop the theoretical Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, apply it in practice and then do empirical research to validate the model. It soon became apparent that the variables involved in the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model were far too numerous to test a hypothesis. It was even more difficult to define a hypothesis, given that it was a new theoretical model. As a result it was decided to do exploratory research, focused on the Upper-Left Quadrant of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, the interior domain of the individual. Five research methodologies were researched and considered; four were found to be unacceptable for this research projected. The four methodologies that were found to be unacceptable and the reasons why they were found to be unacceptable are presented in table 4.1.

<p><b>Action Research</b></p> <p>Action research is concerned with identifying a problem, implementing a change intervention and then monitoring the process. Where necessary corrective action is taken. Because it is a change initiative it would normally involve a group of people working collectively to solve the problem.</p>	<p><b>Reason for not using the methodology</b></p> <p>This coaching project was not classified as a change program. Its aim was to explore executive coaching as a means to develop managers and leaders ability to better manage the complexity involved in managing a large complex organisation. My interest was to explore what these individuals had actually learnt during this process. The research project was therefore exploratory in nature. To start an action research project I would need to know what questions to ask. My research was aimed at generating possible questions for future research. At the start of this project we did not even know what types of questions to ask.</p>
<p><b>Soft Systems Methodology</b></p> <p>This methodology is concerned with understanding the whole system, to understand the problem within the system and then to implement the desirable change.</p>	<p><b>Reason for not using the methodology</b></p> <p>As is the case with action research this project was not seen as a change intervention. The intervention was based on experiential learning; hence we wanted to explore what clients had actually learnt. If the research question was to explore the impact that coaching had had in the organisation then I believe that this would have been the appropriate methodology. Furthermore, in soft systems thinking we often work with the ideal versus the real state of affairs. When we started this project we did not know what the ideal state was for coaching. My research project was exploratory with the hope that it might enable us to start asking the questions that will enable us to do research on how things should be. In this project we wanted to generate a hypothesis that could be tested at a later stage.</p>
<p><b>Experiments</b></p> <p>This methodology would involve manipulating one or a number of variables in order to assess the effects. It calls for a high degree of control.</p>	<p><b>Reason for not using the methodology</b></p> <p>The theoretical model that I had developed is highly complex and is depended on a number of inter related variables. It would be virtually impossible to experiment with the model as whole. The dependences are far too numerous and too interrelated. For experiments to work subsections of the model would have to be tested. Once again I believe that my research was very exploratory in nature. The outcome of the research could be a number of hypotheses that could be tested or experimented with.</p>
<p><b>Surveys</b></p> <p>This methodology is associated with asking people questions via interviews.</p>	<p><b>Reason for not using the methodology</b></p> <p>Once again I believed that the profession was and is in such an early stage of development that we do not even know what meaningful questions to ask. I believed that my research could help to generate questions that could be used in future surveys.</p>

Table 4.1 Research Methodologies that were considered and rejected.

The objective of the research was to explore the individual's subjective learning experience while being coached within the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. With the aim of using what I learnt to continuously refine or change the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It was about exploring and discovering rather than measuring and explaining. Exploring and discovering the meaning and essence of the learning experience while being coached. The research was about obtaining descriptions of experience through first-person accounts through the use of reflective essays. It was about exploring people's inner world's or dimensions. As a result it was qualitative in nature and hypothesis generating rather than hypothesis testing. Furthermore, experiential learning and continuous growth lies at the heart of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It was therefore important that the research methodology supported that philosophy and built on it. As a result, an adapted version of the Transcendental Phenomenological Methodology of Moustakas (1994) was chosen for this study. Traditionally, this methodology involves designing questionnaires and conducting interviews, which means that interviews are the primary source of data collection. This is where I adapted the methodology, instead of gathering the data via interviews I chose to collect the data by means of reflective essays. That was the only adaptation, after that I used the methodology as is. The Transcendental Phenomenological Methodology consists of four steps.

- **The Epoche Process:** This is about involving oneself in a new experience in a new way. It is about setting aside our prejudgements, biases and preconceived ideas about things. From the Epoche, we are challenged to create new ideas, new feelings, new inwardnesses and understandings. It is a way of genuine looking and experiencing that precedes reflection, forming judgements or reaching conclusions.
- **Phenomenological Reduction:** Here the task is to describe in textural language just what one sees, not only in terms of the objective reality but also the internal acts of consciousness, the relationship between the phenomenon and the self. It is called reduction because it leads us back to our own experience of the way things are. The aim being to identify individual themes and then to develop a composite textural description from the individual themes to arrive at the experience of the group as a whole.



- **Imaginative variation:** Here the task is to derive structural themes from the textural descriptions that have been obtained through phenomenological reduction. The critical question that needed to be explored was how did the experience of the phenomena come to be what it is?
- **Synthesis of Meaning and Essences:** The final step involved the intuitive integration of the fundamental textural and structural descriptions into a unified statement of the essence of the experience.

(For a more detailed description of the methodology refer to Chapter Two where the Transcendental Phenomenological Methodology was integrated with the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model).

#### **4.5.1 My role as researcher in terms of the design and conduct of the project**

Given my extensive experience in running and managing large projects I had no doubt that I would be able to manage this research project effectively. I brought to this project years of experience of coaching people on a one-on-one basis and felt very comfortable about that part of the research project. Another advantage that I brought to the design and conduct of this project was my strong analytical abilities. This I had gained from years of analysis in companies, and it was especially developed and strengthened through the research that I did for my MBA thesis. In that thesis I had to analyse 20 years of data for the mutual fund industry. The disadvantage for this project, however, was that my skills lay in analysing quantitative data. Prior to this project I had never done or undertaken qualitative analysis. I had absolutely no experience or knowledge of how to do qualitative research. From the time that I made the decision to do qualitative research, I knew that this could be my Achilles heel. To compound the problem even further, I knew absolutely nothing about phenomenology. Learning about phenomenology and its associated research methodology made up the bulk of my desk research. Fortunately I was blessed to meet Professor Frans Cilliers, who is seen as the foremost qualitative researchers in South Africa. I was even more fortunate when Professor David Lane organised for Frans to become my supervisor on this research project. As a result, I relied very heavily on the guidance of Professors Cilliers and Lane throughout the analysis part of the project.

## **4.6 Research methodology**

### **4.6.1 Participants – co-researchers**

The first part of the research process was to select the sample universe who could participate in the research project. In this case the sample universe was the coachees nominated by T-Systems to partake in the coaching pilot-project. There were two females and fifteen males involved with the project. Only two of the participants were non-white.

At the end of the coaching project, coachees were re-invited to become co-researchers in the research project if they wanted to. The qualifying criterion was the submission of a reflective essay. Of the initial seventeen coachees, thirteen selected to become co-researchers by submitting a reflective essay. Eight of the co-researchers were White Afrikaans speaking Males, three were White English speaking Males, one was a White Afrikaans speaking Female and one was a Non-white English speaking Male. In total it was a response rate of 76%.

### **4.6.2 Data gathering method**

During the coaching sessions I made notes of what was being discussed and on any decisions that were taken. These notes were dated and filed in a file created for each coachee. The amount and detail of notes taken depended on what was discussed, the depth of the conversation and the confidentiality of the issues at hand. It was not uncommon for coachees to ask me not to record what they were speaking about. At the same time I often used to reflect on these sessions in my own reflective journal. Here I reflected on how the session went, what worked or did not work and how I felt about things.

From the outset coachees were aware that they would be part of the research project. Each coachee was informed that they would be asked to write a reflective essay at the end of the coaching project and that these essays would form the basis of the phenomenological research. As a result each coachee was encouraged to keep a reflective journal on their experience of being coached throughout the duration of the coaching project. The Personal Learning Contract ended with the question, “What have I learnt from this exercise?” In both cases the objective was to facilitate continuous reflection on the coaching experience.

The decision was made not to use structured interviews to collect the data for this research project. Co-researchers were asked to write a three to four page reflective essay on what they had learnt, by answering the question, “*What have I learnt from this coaching experience?*” There were two reasons for doing this. Firstly, reflective essays enhanced the co-researchers reflective abilities, thereby enhancing the experiential learning process. And secondly, co-researchers could give a first hand textural and structural description of their own experience. The assumption was that it would be a more accurate account of their experience than if the researcher had to interview them and then write up their experience through all the filters that the researcher would use to interpret the experience. These reflective essays, which can be made available on request, were the primary data source and formed the basis of the phenomenological analysis. It is important at this point to mention that every respondent was given the option to write the essay in English or Afrikaans. All respondents decided to write the essays in English, even though nine co-researchers were Afrikaans speaking. As a result of English being their second language, the grammatical presentation of the English language is not always grammatically correct. Finally, although the co-researchers were asked to write an essay of three to four pages, the essays varied in length from one to nine pages.

## **4.7 Data analysis and processing**

It is important to mention that the analysis and processing of the data was strictly according to the Transcendental Phenomenological Methodology.

### **4.7.1 The Epoche process**

This was about involving myself in a new experience in a new way. It was about setting aside my prejudgements, biases and preconceived ideas about things. From the Epoche, we are challenged to create new ideas, new feelings, new inwardnesses and understandings. It is a way of genuine looking and experiencing that precedes reflection, forming judgements or reaching conclusions.

Having received the essays the first step was to get immersed in the Epoche process by just reading the essays for familiarisation. This carried on for about a month. The essays would be read and then put aside for awhile and then read at a later stage again. Interestingly enough, every time the essays were read different meanings would arise. At the same time there was a growing awareness of my own prejudices and biases. The challenge for me was to learn to stay open.

### **4.7.2 Phenomenological reduction**

Here the task was to describe in textural language just what I saw, not only in terms of the objective reality but also the internal acts of consciousness, the relationship between the phenomena and the self. The challenge was to arrive at a complete textural description of the experience of the group as a whole.

Having gained familiarity with the content of the essays the next step involved the phenomenological reduction part of the analysis. Here the essays were content analysed which involved the breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising

and categorising of the data. The aim was to identify various themes within each individual essay.

When I started to read the essays I was initially overwhelmed by the amount of data. I did not know where to start. So I started to build mind maps on the wall of my study. I would read the essay see a theme developing and create a branch under that theme supported by the data, a very labour intensive process. Especially if you consider that I had to do this for every essay. One evening a friend of mine came to visit and saw all the maps on the wall and asked me what I was doing. I then explained the whole process of doing the analysis to him. He promptly told me I was mad and asked me why I don't do it in MindManager®, a computer package that allows one to build mind maps on your personal computer. He then gave me his version of MindManager®. In MindManager® I still had to create the mind maps manually, in that I read the essay saw a theme and then created a theme branch. The advantage, however, was that I could now just copy and paste the supporting data, from the original essay, onto that theme. This greatly enhanced the efficiency of the analysis process; with relative ease I could cut and paste data as I saw themes developing. It was a much neater process and I could back up the data. The other big advantage of the package was that once the mind map was completed I could export it to Word®. This greatly speeded up the process especially when I started to combine the individual themes into combined group themes. (Appendix 4 contains an example of a reflective essay. The mind map that was built according to themes extracted and the word version of the themes extracted from the essay. The same procedure was followed for all thirteen essays. Themes that were extracted for each essay can be made available on request.) This analysis went through a number of iterations as preliminary themes were refined even further.

Once I had content analysed all the essays and extracted the themes, these individual themes, were collated into generalised horizons of the group as a whole. (These themes or horizons and the analysis can be made available on request.) A requirement of horizontalization is that all statements are treated as equal and that the applying of hierarchies of significance should be avoided. By avoiding hierarchical assumptions, the researcher is in a better position to examine the experience with less prejudice. Similar themes from the individual essays were clustering under common horizons.

The horizons that arose for the group as a whole were, dependency, trusting relationship, reflection, more complex work, learning themes, self autonomy, awareness of self in relation to others, transpersonal awareness and self awareness.

Having defined the horizons for the group as a whole, the next step was to develop a composite textural description to arrive at the experience of the group as a whole. Here the analysis went a step further. The first step was to refine the horizons into more coherent themes. This involved rereading all the analysis and moving some of the data where necessary to support the more refined themes. This process took about three months. Having defined the themes I shared my findings with Professors David Lane and Frans Cilliers. David said I was on the right track and encouraged me to keep going. Frans pointed out that in qualitative research it was common practice to distinguish between cognitive, affective, intrapersonal and interpersonal experiences. As a result, the supporting data for every theme was then analysed to identify interpersonal, intrapersonal and transpersonal experiences. These experiences were then analysed even further to distinguish between cognitive and affective experiences. In so doing the analysis was able to build a rich picture of what the group as a whole experienced as a result of their coaching experience. In total ten themes were identified that described the experience of the group as a whole. These ten themes with the supporting data and analysis are explored in depth in Chapter Five.

#### **4.7.3 Imaginative variation**

Having derived a composite textural description (the ten themes) of the experience of the group as a whole, the next step involved Imaginative Variation to derive a composite structural description of the group. Here the aim was to try and understand how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced. The critical question to answer or explore is how did the experience of the phenomena come to be what it is? Through the utilization of imagination, varying the frames of reference, different perspective and points of views, I tried to derive a structural description of the experience and the underlying factors that account for what is being experienced. In essence I attempted to develop an understanding or “theory” about how the experience came about.

To understand how this experience came about it was necessary to draw on the reflective essays, the coaching notes that were taken during the coaching sessions and my reflective journals. This involved rereading the coaching notes and the reflective journal to try and understand what contributed to these experiences. By combining all three data sources, it was possible to develop a composite structural description of the group as a whole. This description is put out in Chapter Five.

#### **4.7.4 The synthesis of the meaning and essence**

The final part of the research methodology was to write up a synthesis of the meaning and essences of the experiences of the group as a whole. This was done by integrating the composite textural and composite structural descriptions of the group as a whole and is explored in some length in Chapter Five.

#### **4.8 Summary**

This chapter started by setting the organisational context in which the research project took place. It then mentioned how the ethical and legal issues were dealt with. It then explained how the coaching process worked and gave an example of how the Integrated Experiential coaching Model was implemented in practice. Having set the overall context, it moved into the objective of the research project, how the research was designed and the research methodology was chosen. This involved the selection of the co-researchers and how the data for the research was collected. It then goes on to describe how the data was analysed and processed.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings**

#### **5.1 Context and introduction**

The first part of the data analysis involved the Epoche process. Having received the essays the first step was to get immersed in the Epoche process by just reading the essays for familiarisation. The essays would be read and then put aside for awhile and then read at a later stage again. Having gained familiarity with the content of the essays the next step involved the phenomenological reduction part of the analysis. Here the essays were content analysed which involved the breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualising and categorising of the data. The aim was to identify various themes within each individual essay. Once all the individual essays had been content analysed and the themes extracted, these individual themes, were collated into generalised horizons of the group as a whole. This involved taking similar themes from the individual essays at face value and clustering them under a common horizon. The horizons that arose for the group as a whole were, dependency, trusting relationship, reflection, more complex work, learning themes, self autonomy, awareness of self in relation to others, transpersonal awareness and self awareness. Having defined the horizons for the group as a whole, the next step was to develop a composite textural description to arrive at the experience of the group as a whole.

This chapter starts with the phenomenological reduction part of the methodology which involves developing the composite textural description in terms of the common themes that arose for the group as a whole. It then moves on to the imaginative variation part of the methodology which involved developing the composite structural description of the group. Here the aim was to try and understand how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced. The critical question that was answered was how did the experience of the phenomena come to be what it was?



By integrating the composite textural description and the composite structural description a synthesis of the meaning and essences of the experiences of the group as a whole is defined. Finally it presents the research hypothesis that was generated.

## **5.2 Phenomenological reduction**

Set out below is the composite textural description which describes the experience of the group as a whole.

### **5.2.1 The relationship started off as one of dependency and the transference of power**

My co-researchers had either been nominated to be on the coaching project by their managers, *“I was nominated to take part in the coaching process by my manager”* or they had asked to be part of the process, *“I asked my manager if I could be part of the coaching initiative”* as a result of identifying developmental needs, *“I really went through some effort to determine my competencies and my development needs. I realized, once I really thought about it, that for 90% of my development needs I do not need courses, or to read more books or articles. I have studied enough and read enough, since I have always believed in continuous self-development. I also realized that my immediate environment was not conducive to addressing my development needs; it had too many problems of its own. It was then that I decided to commit myself to some kind of executive coaching process.”*

As a result, co-researchers started the coaching project with mixed feelings that included;

- Excitement about the prospect of being coached and the privilege of actually having a coach, *“I was very excited about the privilege afforded to me to have a coach.”* And, *“When I was told about the coaching programme and that I’d been selected to be part of it, I was immediately excited. Having experienced psychotherapy in the past, I was aware of the benefits of 1-to-1 intense periods of reflection and discussion.”*

- Feeling unsure about the what to expect from the coach, *“Will the coach be prescriptive, or will we click, what is the stuff that we will work on, is there a brief from my management, etc?”*
- Feelings of uncertainty stemmed from the belief that managers who were not performing were targeted for coaching. As a result they felt uncertain about their own abilities as line and technical managers, *“As coaching or informal tuition was a new concept to me, my first reaction when introduced to coaching was that of uncertainty towards my abilities as line and technical manager. The assumption was that all managers not performing, was targeted for some kind of evaluation sessions with some outsider that would categorized the target group of managers in pre defined blocks.”*
- Reservations and cynicism, *“When I was approached to participate in the Executive Coaching Sessions at T-Systems South Africa I had some major reservations. After consulting at Clients for some eight years and spending a previous career in banking for fifteen years I have developed a certain healthy cynicism about these types of programmes”* Cynical questions that were being asked were; *“Was this just another fad that was mandatory to further your right of passage to be one of the chosen few in the corporate environment that could possibly allow a rise to the top of the company pyramid? Was this another consulting approach that put lots of billable resources at a client and added very little actual value to the company in the process? Was this a programme developed by someone’s brother, sister, mother or father, sold to the executive and now because it was paid for it had to be the right thing for the targeted group of employees?”*
- Feelings of skepticism and about the value that coaching could add, *“When first introduced to the idea of "Coaching", I was skeptic if it would add value at all”. And, “The skepticism stemmed from - not enough time, to busy, what value this person will add not knowing the organisation, etc. This "feeling" was further enhanced by being "interrogated, my strengths and weaknesses discussed" in front of a number of people.”*

Dependency is evident in feelings like, being excited about having a coach, feeling uncertain about their abilities as line managers, feeling cynical and sceptical about what a coach can do for them. There is this feeling that a coach can or cannot do something for them. As if development depends on the coach. In isolated cases this dependency even continued for some time into the coaching relationship. This is evidenced by the way the co-researcher speaks about “*we decided*” as opposed to “*I decided*”. “*As part of the outcome of this work session we decided that it would be a good idea to get involved on task teams (whenever it arises) to be in a better position to sell my ideas.*”

On a cognitive level, co-researchers had various expectations and beliefs that included;

- That it was a quick way to learn, as they could draw on the content knowledge and experience of the coach, “*Secondly I was also band new in a new job and I needed to gain some content knowledge about the subject - fast. I was in the lucky position that my coach came from the same background. Since I had a small baby, studying was not an option at that time and I was very exited that I would be able to learn from him as I go along and draw from his experiences in similar fields.*”
- That the coach would prevent the individual from making mistakes, “*Coaching in a nutshell: It is the ability to fast track in the corporate environment, why fast track? You do not have to physically learn at your expense the mistakes that many before you have learnt; your coach is there to give you the guidance and the experience that they have garnered.*”
- Asking the coach, “*what am I going to learn from this?*” as if it was the coach’s responsibility to set the learning agenda.
- An expectation that the co-researchers would be given some “*formal learning documentation*” to learn from.
- The belief that the coach could not add value because he did not know the organization, “*what value this person will add not knowing the organization*”, especially if he has no real world experience and drives the sessions from a purely academic approach, “*It is of no value to be coached by a person that has no real world experience and drives the sessions from a pure academic approach.*”
- The belief that they were not getting the support they needed from within the organization. “*There was also no support from within T-Systems SA to change my*

*situation. Those people that I believed could and should assist me in getting out of the situation were, when consulting with them, just adding to the problem.”*

- To get advice and input on people management, *“Part of my responsibilities was leading a team of 4 people and I felt that advice and input into the people management side of my job, would be of great benefit to me.”*

Transference of power is evident in beliefs like, believing that the coach can prevent them from making mistakes, expecting the coach to set the learning agenda or provide formal learning documentation and that it would be a quick way to learn. Why experiment and make mistakes the coach can help prevent that.

### **5.2.2 For coaching to be effective a trusting relationship is vital**

The building of a trusting relationship was vital in the coaching relationship, *“It is all about the relationship and as with many people this is based on trust”*. Without trust and respect, learning could not take place, *“I have since realised that the crux of successful coaching lies in the relationship. No learning will take place if trust and respect are not established first.”* The building of a coaching relationship was not a quick fix and it took time to build, *“Coaching a valuable tool that needs to be unlocked over time, I do not believe that it is a quick fix. It is all about the relationship and as with many people this is based on trust and trust takes time”*. And, *“This was very much an orientation session – we were getting to know each other and sizing each other up”*

The building of trust took time due to certain intrapersonal issues, *“Well coaching, this is all about the relationship and unfortunately this takes time for people like me who are not so trustworthy from day "dot"”* or interpersonal issues, *“It normally takes me some time to trust new people in my life. I have had some terrible experiences in the past that make opening up to strangers quite hard”*.

The building of trust slowed the process down and lead to frustration, *“I, being structured, found the first couple of session frustrating, as I wanted to move much faster. Once again, the following dawned on me - we cannot proceed without a level of trust.”*

There was the realisation that trust was a barrier that needed to be addressed in order to proceed, *“I think that the most important thing that comes to mind is trust, that for me was the first barrier that needed to be crossed. It was something that wasted two sessions for me, and after tackling it head on...”* Factors that contributed to the building of trust included;

- Cognitive exploration,” *While the relationship was being established, we kept ourselves busy dealing with cognitive learning moments. I had a few theories to explore and needed some guidance on time management and strategic alignment issues. Although that might now seem insignificant it played the role of building trust and respect.”*
- The coach being more objective because he was not, *“a colleague, a friend, or a family member”.*
- An environment where the co-researcher set the pace, *“I was amazed at how quickly I was comfortable with being totally honest with my coach. Maybe it was because he let you determine the pace and not make you feel that you have to”*
- Co-researchers setting their own agenda, *“In a nutshell, coaching is the ability to bounce ideas and actions off someone with more or different experience than yourself who only has your agenda at heart. This can happen at no other place in the corporate environment.”*
- A lack of prejudice, *“A sounding board without prejudice” ,*
- A lack of judgment, *“This is the foundation of everything, it is the sharing of your most outspoken views and ideas in a forum that does not judge but gives direction and a different perspective.”*
- Confidentiality, *“Further, I found the coaching sessions extremely valuable from the point of view that they were conducted in the strictest of confidence and I could talk about anything and often when I felt down or unhappy about a specific issue, I could talk about it to the coach and often feel much better and with renewed inspiration after the session.”*

- Working on strengths rather than weaknesses, *“where we rather work on strengths than trying to erase weaknesses.”*
- Being able to speak about anything, *“I could talk about anything and often when I felt down or unhappy about a specific issue, I could talk about it to the coach and often feel much better and with renewed inspiration after the session”*

There was the realisation that trust was a critical element in establishing the coaching relationship. Factors that contributed to the building of trust included, the coach being objective, co-researchers set their own learning agenda and pace, a lack of prejudice and judgement, confidentiality and being allowed to speak about anything.

### **5.2.3 That reflection is important for learning and personal growth**

Intrapersonal cognitive insights about reflection included;

- That a lack of reflection was due to being too task and goal directed, *“I afforded myself very little time or opportunity to reflect. As a task and goal driven person, my emphasis was on performance and outputs.”*
- The recognition for the need to extract oneself from the detailed operational level in order to reflect, *“The programme also made me realise that I need to take time to reflect and extract myself from the detailed operations.”*
- That reflection enabled more time to understand and gather the correct information about a situation before trying to correct the problem or implement a solution or structure, *“I have learnt that I am entitled to use sufficient time to understand and gather enough information about a situation before movement to correct the situation or implement solutions or structures that addresses the situation, is expected.”*
- That reflection was critical in human learning, *“Reflection is one of the most important critical success factors in human learning experiences”*
- That continuous reflection is needed to learn and grow, *“We can need to reflect to learn/grow. This should be done continuously.”*
- Without the will to reflect and learn, coaching is meaningless, *“If you are not willing to reflect and learn - all is a waste of time.”*

- That reflection was the start of a journey of personal change, *“I have realized that the following interwoven steps took place in terms of my learning: Reflection led to perspective. Perspective led to awareness. Awareness led to insight. Insight led to re-evaluation. Re-evaluation led to confidence. Confidence led to changed behaviour.”*

There was the cognitive recognition that reflection was critical for learning, growth and personal change. A further realisation was that reflection does not happen because they are too involved in the day- to- day operational issues and tasks.

Reflection extended awareness into the interpersonal domain, *“Coaching has a strong learning component to it - reflection helped me to realize things about myself and others (awareness) which, in time, became a powerful catalyst for changing behavior that is beneficial to leadership.”*, and into life in general, *“It taught me the value of quiet, not busy, time for myself, where I can reflect, think and gain understanding of myself and life in general.”*

Reflection about themselves led to intrapersonal insights about behaviour, body language and unspoken words which in turn could alter behaviour, *“I realized that I need to become more of an observer. Being enthusiastic, it is my natural habit to engross myself into a situation (eg meetings and workgroups). If I observe more of the behaviour, body language, unspoken words, etc, I will be able to make an even greater impact and contribution. I should also try and stand back to observe myself in situations and guide myself to improved interaction.”*

There was the realisation that reflection could lead to changed behaviours, through being more aware of oneself and others.

#### **5.2.4 Through coaching individuals became more self aware**

Through telling their stories, and reflecting on these stories the co-researchers raised their intrapersonal levels of awareness on a number of levels, *“The ability to go through my life history with the mentor was a good exercise for me as it helped me realise where I had come from and where I was”*. There was a heightened awareness

about their feelings, thoughts and how that affected the individual, *“Again through our coaching sessions I learnt to become aware of what is happening around me and to me, with out trying to change it immediately. I was creating everything I was trying to move away from again! I then became aware of the feelings and thoughts that I experienced, as well as their effect on me.”*

Awareness of intrapersonal affective issues included,

- Guilt, *“Through this process I become aware that guilt is a major player in my life”,*
- Not being good enough, *"Am I good enough",*
- Do people like me and the need to belong, *“The main elements included an intense need to be liked and belong,”*
- Fear of rejection, *“strong fear of rejection”,*
- Fear of failure and being different, *“My fear of rejection and failure wasn't due to the fact that I was an unhappy child, or even due to the fact that I am gay and therefore immediately 'different' (although these aspects certainly helped to accentuate these feelings)”*,
- Feeling that I need to continuously prove myself and my self worth, *“I worked extremely hard to prove myself”,*
- Feelings of insecurity and the need for recognition, *“I now understand that the constant hunger was my own need for recognition, stemming from my insecurities”,*
- Feeling discontent about their lives, *“Being a very discontented person by nature”,*
- The need for acceptance, *“Whom did I crave this acceptance from? Why did I think it was necessary to have "their" acceptance?”*
- Being angry with oneself, *“The coaching session made me realise that I had never moved on from a previous career failure and this was affecting aspects of my life. If anything I was still angry with myself and this was also being reflected on other people”,*
- Ambition, *“My ambition, initially fueled by insecurity and the need to constantly prove myself”.*



- The feeling that others were impatient with them due to a lack of delivery, *“I felt that some persons might be getting impatient with me for not getting to do training I promised.”*
- Feelings of not doing a good job, *“I also felt that I was not doing a good job as I was taking too long to get the department up and running.”*
- Feeling lost, alone and uncertain, *“Quite soon I felt very lost and alone. Everything that I used to hold on to, and draw my strength from, seemed to loose its credibility. I had to make it up as I went along.”*
- Frustration and regret, *“As indicated previously, I believe that the learning experience is primarily my responsibility, so what I'm about to write should not be seen as a failure on the coacher's side, but merely a realization that we should have changed the "coaching" approach once realized that we aren't progressing: After my 6th session I progressively got more and more frustrated. I felt that I should have realized that the approach is not working and/or changed my attitude. Of which I did the latter.”*
- Not being assertive enough, *“I felt that I am not assertive enough when required - I must stress this was only a feeling. I have always been able to get things done and deliver within the deadlines - it was a very essential part of my job. I felt that it would be useful to explore this feeling.”*
- Self doubt, *“I asked myself why do I doubt myself and my ability to be more assertive. The things that nag me in this regard was what will happen if my requests are ignored, will I be able to mobilise the teams, will they deliver on time, who can I trust to deliver on time and when is the optimal time to start chasing - to be assertive.”*
- Hurt, humiliation and unhappiness, *“stemmed from feelings of hurt, humiliation & unhappiness”*
- Feeling trusted and confused at the same time, *“The only piece of (in)sanity in the whole mêlée was the privilege of being present during some of the most wonderful growth of a co-worker whom I love with my entire being. This is possibly the greatest thing on earth – to have the honor of being trusted while there is confusion, being able to watch others grow themselves and yourself, realizing themselves.”*

- Stress, *“These were hectic times. The sales organisation was just finalised. On a personal front – my wife had three operations in a row and things on the home front were very unsettled as well.”*
- Feeling grateful, *“Looking back, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to undergo coaching. I certainly count it as a highlight in my career thus far, and one of the best things that happened to me in 2003. I am grateful to my company and my manager for affording me the chance to develop myself in this way, and to my coach for his time, insight and patience.”*

Through the coaching relationship co-researchers became more aware of feelings of guilt, not being good enough, fear of rejection and failure, insecurity, the need to continuously prove ones own worth, the need for acceptance, being angry with themselves, discontent, ambition, lost, alone, uncertain, frustration, regret, hurt, humiliation, feeling trusted and confused at the same time, stress and gratefulness. Most of the expressed feelings were negative. The coaching relationship seemed to make the co-researchers aware of unconscious negative feelings.

As co-researchers reflected on the affective issues they became aware that these feelings often stemmed from belief systems that they had either adopted about themselves or accepted from others, *“The awareness that I gained during the coaching sessions of certain feelings, thoughts and behaviours, including the influence of societal 'conditioning,' helped me to gain insight and understand myself.”* Intrapersonal cognitive insights included,

- The need to see themselves for who they are and not based on certain perceptions, *“Amongst some of the areas we need to explore further are how to remove certain "perceptions" that influential people may have of me. What I am referring to is basically the "box" people put us in. ....One of the most important lessons for me is that I should see myself for who I am, and not only through the eyes of my peers and (position) superiors. Avoid the trap!”*
- The questioning of fundamental belief systems that were causing enormous stress, *“My journey turned from questioning my marriage to religious concepts to my belief systems and eventually the concept of self... This realisation did not fit in at all with all my belief systems or the image I have of myself! It is just not on! This*

*fact, which was only articulated in my mind, was threatening to destroy my life as well as my mind.”, and “The relationship issue sparked a domino effect in all other aspects of my life. My journey turned from questioning my marriage to religious concepts to my belief systems and eventually the concept of self.”*

- *That certain belief systems were inherited or taken in from others, “I was caught in a hell of what I have been taught by institutions and traditions. Those things created my own belief systems of what is wrong and what are right vs what I knew I felt.” And “The system was fundamentally and blindly based on other people's ideas of what the world and salvation was about.” And, “Other people, and society at large, have influenced who I am and what I believe about myself. My 'self' was based on the labels I was given, or I assumed.”*
- *That the current self concept was limited, “These labels, like 'different' or 'gay' or 'not good enough,' shaped who I believe I was. I became them. In becoming them, my fears and insecurities where both the demons & drivers in my life - it is what kept me striving for continued work success, often at the detriment of other aspects of my life. In fact, my need to perform and succeed at work, kept me from being completely fulfilled as a person.” And “The bit that's relevant here is that the identity that had to be created to replace the gap left by the previous belief system was based on pure IQ, logic, reason, rationalization. It was constructed by the 150 odd points of intelligence quotient allegedly spinning around in my head. It was a system that was to evolve with heavy tendencies toward postmodernism mainly because of the circular and repetitive thought patterns that exist in trying to solve problems of duality with the mind. I loved the identity, it defined me in a way that was unique in many ways, made me separate from the other, and in many cases the difference was huge. I loved being able to use the power of my differentiation to defeat others. It was bigger, better, smarter. For years I almost literally hated "stupid" people, was impatient to an extreme always had the "right" idea, and if I didn't... well then war ensued. I simply had to be right, and I was, and it was wonderful - for a while. Sometime in the last few years a growing dissatisfaction drew into question the existence of this ego.”*
- *Projections of others, “I realised that my fear of rejection and failure are common human issues and what people feel and say towards me, are more often than not, people's own baggage rather than my own demons.”*

- The possibility of loving more than one person, *“Together with the fact that I was beginning to explore the possibility that I could love two men differently at the same time.”*
- Current weaknesses, *“One of my weaknesses is rather to do the job myself rather to wait for other guys for their inputs.”*
- Self insight, *“I have learnt a lot about myself and confirmed my knowledge of myself.”* And, *“I told Lloyd (who is not a colleague, a friend, or a family member) about myself, I learned so much about myself, about the meaning certain events and people had on me.”* And, *“I have the ability to understand theory, create theoretical models (theorist) and to apply these in practise (pragmatist). I am the bridge between the technical, pricing and selling teams.”*
- Scared of taking risks, *“The penny also dropped in terms of risk-taking - if constant success is so important, risk taking represent possible failure, an option that I was extremely uncomfortable with.”*
- Theoretical knowledge is not enough to succeed on the job, *“The intuitive abilities of perceiving information and feeling based judgements necessary in the face-to-face selling environment and my intuitive lack of it - could explain my nightmarish experience at the sales school in 1999. We discussed the sales school experience. This experience was a shock to me as I have done everything on theoretical and effort level to pass it - but did not. The thing I now understand is that on a Sensing level - reading the situation and reacting to it - was what was missing.”*
- What their real passion in life is, *“It became very clear to me that one has a greater chance of achieving success in what one does if you have a passion for it. During these coaching sessions it also became quite clear that I have a greater passion for business and investment markets”*
- How past experience affects current behaviour, *“The habit of pulling work towards yourself comes from being a consultant because if you have no work you generate no fees which are the way that you are measured.”*
- That change is difficult and that it can be painful, *“If you are your mind, and you want to change, this means that you must change your mind right? But how can you change your mind? Well, use your mind to change it. See the problem? The ego, which I think is the manifestation of the minds attempt to create a personality, requires that an identity has to put to death a part of itself, to a larger or lesser*

*degree. I don't think its exaggerating to say that this is like self mutilation, imagine chopping of bits of your self coz you don't think they are useful anymore! The mind, like the body experiences pain and of course will create problems because of the inherent will to live. And so... the defense is mounted, and the change is resisted, it's slow and often more painful than its worth."*

- That it is difficult to respond spontaneously, *"The thing that transpired from this uncomfortable learning experience was that I also realised that I find it to difficult to think on my feet. I needed time to let the information sink in and enable me to formalise an answer or appropriate response."*
- The link between coaching and therapy, *"The main link between therapy and coaching only became clear later. Therapy, in my experience, is hugely beneficial in terms of gaining insight into feelings and thought patterns and putting them into perspective. Coaching had a strong learning component to it – reflection helped me to realize things about myself and others (awareness) which, in time, became a powerful catalyst for changing behaviour that is beneficial to leadership"*
- That issues which had previously been dealt with in therapy were still prevalent, *"The origin of these feelings and beliefs stemmed from my childhood and I would classify them as inner-child issues. Although identifying and dealing with these issues in psychotherapy in the past, they were still prevalent, albeit in subtler forms and guises."*
- Being rigid, *"Being a black and white person there is only right and wrong in this world. No in between."*
- Being aware of feelings and thoughts and the effect they have, *"I then became aware of the feelings and thoughts that I experienced, as well as their effect on me."*

Co-researchers became cognitively aware of how the self concept was a construct based on beliefs that they had accepted from others. Insights that support this was the realisation that the current self concept was limited and a projection of others, that certain belief systems were inherited for others, the questioning of fundamental belief systems that were causing stress and the need to see themselves for who they are and not based on certain perceptions. There was the realisation that the past continues to

effect the present in that past experience affects current behaviour and that issues which had previously been dealt with in therapy were still prevalent.

The raising of intrapersonal affective and cognitive awareness led to changes in beliefs, motivation and behaviour, *“As soon as we (the coach & I) started digging beneath the surface of these reflections, we quickly discovered a number of things. Bringing them into consciousness, and openly discussing them, was a very important step in changing behaviour over the longer term.”* Intrapersonal changes included;

- The re-evaluation of the self concept, *“Once I knew and understood certain things, I could make a shift in terms of thinking and acting. But first, I needed to re-evaluate what I thought about myself and how I thought about success, and achieving it..... Re-evaluating my beliefs lead to confidence in my new beliefs and actions. Seeing things in perspective and in a new light, really set me free and gave me the confidence to change.”* And, *“In that period of change I experienced a revolution of the mind, an incredibly powerful source of identity contained within the confines of the skull came alive that conquered doubt and darkness and surveyed the pile of ruin that was once a complete and unshakable belief system.”*
- To forgive oneself and move on, *“The coaching session made me realise that I had never moved on from a previous career failure and this was affecting aspects of my life. If anything I was still angry with myself and this was also being reflected on other people. What I learned was to forgive myself and stop over compensating at work which I was doing to prevent any future failures.”*
- Challenging existing belief systems and developing new ones, *“I was then forced to look at my belief systems and I had to become brave enough to challenge them. I had to create my own belief systems. This time ones I actually believed in. Not because of what institutions programmed me to believe.”*
- Being comfortable with a more authentic self, *“The aims that I set out for myself for coaching did not materialise. I did not get the content I was aiming for; instead I got the me I was looking for.”* And, *“The 'self' is now defined as what it really is, rather than the label people have assigned to it. I am more confident in my abilities and uniqueness (my 'differentness') and I don't get intimidated as easily. In the coming weeks, months and years, this confidence will help me to experience life to the full.”*

- Realizing that being different can be a gift, *“Being sensitive, intuitive and understanding, made (and continues to make) me unique and gave me skills that most other leaders (especially men) need to force or learn. Instead of hiding my sensitivity in the workplace and concentrate on constantly proving myself, I need to embrace and explore my sensitivity in many ways - one of them is to make open myself up and make myself more vulnerable and take risks in order to grow. I have everything right now to be happy. Being 'different' and that includes being gay, is a gift.*
- Being less judgmental. *“In the workplace it means that I am more sensitive towards other people, I don't pass judgment as easily (because I am used to being judged). It means I am more intuitive about myself and other people, I am understanding rather than judgmental. All these characteristics assist the leadership role in a modern organization like ours.”*
- The need to be more in tune with corporate politics, *“Being a "what you see is what you get" type of person I tend not to play too many corporate games, which is not bad in itself, but it has the consequence that at times I do not play at all and that is fatal. I realized that I will have to apply conscious effort to be in the game, to market what I/we do, to improve communications and not only be the quiet performer.”*
- Being more vulnerable and taking risks, *“Instead of hiding my sensitivity in the workplace and concentrate on constantly proving myself, I need to embrace and explore my sensitivity in many ways - one of them is to make open myself up and make myself more vulnerable and take risks in order to grow.”*
- Lobbying and dialoguing with peers to achieve objectives, *“I came to the realisation that the way that I am acting internally was affecting my ability to get results on different projects and management initiatives. I then realised that I would have to spend far more time on internal dialogue, lobbying and canvassing peers and staff to achieve objectives.”*
- The need to fulfil leadership functions and to delegate, *“Being busy working is not always effective. I have also now realised that at my level my job is to guide the business and make business targets and this does not mean that I have to do all of the work.”*

- The ability to separate personal emotions from business decisions, *“I have to face some hard emotional decisions about staff and business corrective actions that I must take. I now have learned to separate my personal emotional concerns away from my business decisions and realised that I will never be able to morally justify some of the decisions that I have to take. These are not moral decisions but hard business decisions that will secure the survival of the business going forward.”*
- To use questions to lead and teach others, *“It was decided that I compile a list of generic questions that will extract answers to strategic issues around sales opportunities specifically. These questions will be drawn up by observing Exco members and the questions they ask, basing it on my own experience and analysing situations - positive and negative. I have learnt that by being the one asking the questions you are more powerful, you maintain control and stay engaged, you can gently steer towards an expected result, you greatly increase your ability to influence a situation and it increases your power of persuasion as someone is lead by answering pertinent questions to get to a correct or incorrect answer or way of doing something, themselves.”*
- Trusting ones own feelings, *“I learnt that I should trust my feelings around situations and use it to lower stress by putting actions in place sooner than later to counter the situation dictated by my intuition. These feelings (instinct and intuition) has been developed over years through experience, learning from good and bad situations, knowledge of people and their way of doing things, exploring and study.”*
- Seeing things from a new perspective set the individual free to change, *“Re-evaluating my beliefs lead to confidence in my new beliefs and actions. Seeing things in perspective and in a new light, really set me free and gave me the confidence to change.”*
- To stop criticizing and focus energy on what adds value to the company, *“When I describe this change I am not saying now I will sit back and just comment and criticize. It means that I will focus my energy and concentration on the things that add the most value to the company and where the company is unable to go it alone.”*



Having felt the feelings and gained insight into why those feelings could exist, the co-researchers started to become more positive and take control of their own lives. There is a move away from being a victim to taking control. This is done by re-evaluating the self concept, to forgive oneself and move on, challenging existing belief systems and developing new ones, being more comfortable with a more authentic self, realising that being different is a gift and being more vulnerable and taking risks.

### **5.2.5 Heightened self awareness led to an awareness of self in relation to others**

As co-researchers became more aware of their intrapersonal issues they became more aware of how their own feelings, beliefs and behaviors impacted interpersonal interactions. *“My team, and our interaction and behaviour, had a lot to do with our history as a team, but the team members' individual and collective behavior had more to do with my personal attitudes and behavior than I ever thought. My personal issues had an immense influence on the way I handled my team.”* Interpersonal cognitive insights included;

- Personal insecurities led to the need to maintain control over work teams, *“For example, my insecurities meant that I drove myself to succeed and perform, no matter what the circumstances. Handing over responsibility and power to my team was therefore difficult, because that would mean control is out of my hands. Coupled with most of the team member's fairly average competency levels (in terms of complex tasks), I continued to make sure I had a huge influence over them and their outputs, which perpetuated the fact that the team members were insecure of their potential.”*
- The need to be liked or fear of rejection led to being too soft and accommodating, *“A further example: my need to be liked and belong as well as my fear of rejection meant that I was often too soft & accommodating with my team and their performance.”*
- That personal hurts and humiliation led to overcompensation in terms of empathy, *“My overcompensation in terms of empathy and understanding stemmed from feelings of hurt, humiliation & unhappiness I had suffered in my childhood.”*
- That a previous career failure was influencing peer and staff interaction, *“This session also identified a previous career failure point that was still influencing my*

*behaviour and contributing to the way that I approached work. This also contributed to my way of working with other internal peers and staff.”*

- *That personal perceptions are not necessarily the reality, “Interaction with my superiors has been an ongoing problem for me. When I was involved in the creation of business and even in my banking career there was a distinct lack of guidance and knowledge in the organisation. I then made the conclusion that it was a waste of time looking for the required guidance but to put my head down and resolve issues and challenges on my own. While this allowed me to become and known for being innovative there were times that this clashed with the business strategies of the company. I have now realised that the problem is with the way I perceive my management.”*
- *The realization that the more self-autonomous the individual is, the easier it is to delegate personal responsibility to others. “I am free, because I am less affected by what people say and think about me. I am responsible for my own happiness and freedom. Other's happiness is their responsibility. As a leader I can offer empathy, a characteristic I have in abundance. For the rest, people need to deal with their own demons. Leadership doesn't mean power over a team. Leadership means connecting with, and serving people so that they can contribute what they can. This idea of servant leadership is about letting others be. Only if I can be happy and free within myself, I can let others be.”*
- *To accept others, “to accept others as individuals and not labels”*
- *The need to learn to manage people, “a need to learn the ability to manage the complexities of people (according to my definition, issues around 'people')”*
- *Finding it difficult to delegate and the need to take ownership, “In terms of my team, I had difficulty to let my team 'go' and do what they have to, as I tended to take ownership of problems and important, complex tasks”*
- *That internal clients need to be treated with the same respect as external clients, “When working with Clients I did not have the same problem as I am on my best behaviour. I have always felt that internally I do not have to watch my behaviour carefully as talking straight and being brutally honest is required to improve our Client service from employees. My value historically has been determined by Clients and now I must accept that I have internal Clients who also demand value and respect.”*

- The need for adequate staff and resources, *“It also means that I have to have staff and resources around me with the correct skills to deliver on these targets and that one or two people with the correct skills and attitude is not enough to meet targets.”*
- That coaching helps to integrate the person, *“As an HR OD consultant I believe in treating the person at work as a "whole". Integrate his various selves with the work persona, rather than coaxing him with money and status to get the best possible performance from him. The coaching methodology underwrites this 100%. "No man is an island". Whether coaching for performance or development, no better investment can be made to a company's human capital.”*
- That people have different conflict handling styles, *“I used the Enneagram to identify my conflict handling style. Use Internet Enneagram test– Tested very superficially – I was classified as a Type 6 = loyalist = committed security oriented type – engaging, responsible, anxious and suspicious. Lloyd mentioned that in order to grow one should be more like the opposite types of your type - Opposites of Type 6 = Type 3 – Achiever (The Success-Oriented, Pragmatic Type: Adaptable, Excelling, Driven, and Image-Conscious) and Type 9 – Peacemaker (The Easygoing, Self-Effacing Type: Receptive, Reassuring Agreeable, and Complacent)? How these types handle conflict needs to be understood? I have not learnt much from this exercise. What I have learnt is that some people like to create conflict. This is sometimes necessary to get opposite points of view, extract issues and get to the bottom of a problem.”*

Co-researchers realised that their intrapersonal issues often affected the performance of their teams. Insights that facilitated this were things like, personal hurts and humiliation led to overcompensation in terms of empathy, personal insecurities led to the need to maintain control over work teams, the need to be liked or fear of rejection led too being too soft and accommodating and a previous career failure was influencing peer and staff interaction.

These interpersonal cognitive insights lead to interpersonal changes which included;

- To honour differences in individuals and to empower them, *“Everyone is different and use different techniques to achieve their goals By applying certain methodologies I learned to be less impatient and irritated with other people when they don't get down to facts. I empowered the team leaders more and let them be more in control of what they do best.”*
- Coaching teams instead of telling them what to do, *“Another changed behaviour for me as a leader is reduced focus on task or output, and more focus on people. Although this is not an overnight occurrence, my approach is changing from telling them what to do and how to do it to a coaching approach where I support and help them (the team) to reflect and become aware of things.”*
- To use a more facilitative management style, *“I now realise that my behaviour internally and externally has to be the same to achieve objectives and that staff are different and react differently to my management approach. A more facilitative approach would allow me to achieve required results and also ensure that staff would leave a meeting still feeling good about themselves. To support our company strategy to become a learning organisation I will have to soften my management style and allow staff to be guided to a result.”*
- To proactively communicate with management, *“I now realise that I must communicate and pro actively interact with management to get the best results for the company and best outcomes for myself.”*
- To transfer responsibility and accountability to the team, *“A major re-evaluation was that, in the case of my team, I needed to give them the opportunity to develop and learn, and succeed, and fail. Up to now, I had been keeping the team from fulfilling their potential. I needed to transfer responsibility and accountability to the team. That meant that ownership of problems that need to be sorted out, need to be with the people themselves. This need to be part of their growth and development, otherwise I take people's responsibilities away from them.”*

Having gained the insight on how intrapersonal issues affect their teams and peers, co-researchers changed their behaviour towards their teams and peers in that they started to honour differences in individuals and empowered them, coached them instead of

telling them what to do, using a more facilitative management style, proactively communicating with management and transferring responsibility and accountability to the team.

#### **5.2.6 Heightened self awareness led to transpersonal awareness**

For a few co-researchers the level of awareness extended into the transpersonal realm. Transpersonal cognitive insights included,

- The need to create more time and discipline for spiritual development, *“Create more time to spend grow my spirituality. I am creating time to do on this on a regular basis.”*
- That the exploration of spirituality can be a blissful and difficult journey, *“My coaching sessions became blissful spiritual reawakening moments. Together we explored different options and created new realities. Although I decided to explore alternatives and break from my current reality, unconsciously my black and white nature wanted to take over, and find solutions and answers for all my problems. This created just more questions and misery.... My struggle with God became almost unbearable. I was caught in a hell of what I have been taught by institutions and traditions”*
- That identity is not confined to the mind, *“The problem I have been able to discover with Descartes statement is that it equates thinking with existence and mind with identity. The contradiction now becomes too stark to bear - if I am infinite and eternal, how can my existence be contained in the mind? How can my thought equal my identity? These are experientially inadequate explanations. There is only one conclusion for me - I am NOT my mind.”*
- That the true identity transcends the mind, *“I know who I am - I am. And the answer is now clear as if someone switched on a light in a place where light was only an idea. Eckhard Tolle put it so completely "it's the "I am" that comes before I am this, or I am that". The peace that follows this realization (that is - to make real) is quite indescribable. The idea of the witness, the observing presence is the closest explanation - it's adequate. It means that I am the witness of my mind (my former personality, my former existence), it does not mean that the mind is now*

*without reason or purpose, but it does mean that my poor brain does not have to solve the unsolvable problems that I had set before it in my previous conscious construct.” And, “The mind is instead a hammer in the hand of a carpenter (and I sue this analogy specifically), its simply a tool to use to get certain things done. It’s not there to define who you are, I am is there for that. The mind is simply there to give (a somewhat poor) expression of a deeper presence to the material world using restrictive tools like language....The egoic paradigm said “free your mind”. This speaks directly to transcendence, but only within its own implied boundaries. This subtlety is a true but quite shallow deceiver. A moments presence reveals the implied limitation is no longer “out there” because you have a free mind. The limitation is not imposed on the mind - it is the mind. The new paradigm speaks a different message “freedom from your mind” and this speaks to the transcendental nature”*

- That transcending the mind paradoxically makes it more efficient at daily tasks, *“The risk is that this enlightenment (for lack of a more expressive term) renders one redundant to the system. But this is only true if one attaches a romantic judgment to it, in the absence of any judgment, one sees only tasks and behaviors to be performed, the mind is good at these things so we call it and set it about the business of caring for the system. Because the mind is no longer (idealistically) trying to maintain personality and identity it is considerably more able to address the linear in a more focused and efficient manner.”*
- That the individual is part of and functions in a larger system, *“I do perceive a risk here tho... there is still a system, the system needs to perpetuate itself for the wellbeing of its constituent parts, and the parts will do all to keep it alive because it allows them to live. This system governs even the most basic needs of the society that we choose to live in, and it requires of me to add to its continued survival.”*

Some co-researchers realised that their identity transcended the mind and that the individual was part of a larger system. There was the realisation that the spiritual journey can be blissful and difficult journey.

### 5.2.7 Coaching facilitated a learning journey

A heightened intrapersonal awareness led to co-researchers becoming more aware of how coaching had contributed to their learning and that it was a deeply personal journey, *“The context of the learning that I speak about in this essay is very important. There is no doubt that the coaching experience has contributed significantly to my learning (more like development) in this period... Coaching has been a place that has provided learning in its own right; it has also been a place where experience, opinion, problem and question find competent debate, reflection and perspective.... The learning I have experienced in this time through coaching can not be accounted for in terms of some “desirable business or efficiency based outcome” or some improved test score - it has been a deeply personal journey which has resulted in a more whole being and as a natural result a more focused and efficient employee. This seems counter culture, but it’s true.”*

Task based learning included,

- How to address problems / shortcomings systematically, *“I have learned during this process how to address a huge problem/shortcoming systematically”*
- How to implement and review on an ongoing basis, *“how to implement it and that it needs to be reviewed constantly”*
- How to communicate requirements more effectively, *“I realised during this exercise that I should clearly describe my expectations, to follow-up and to review the process on an ongoing bases.” And “I learned during this process how to communicate my requirements in terms of what I want the presentations to look like.”*
- To be more practical and to internalize the learning, *“Having read a multitude of self development books and articles the coaching programme provided the soundboard so much required for real understanding, internalization and real growth. Being able to talk about 4th generation time management principles, outside of the normal work context, added a practical dimension to otherwise theoretical garble.”*

- How to make business processes more explicit, *“During this session we draw pictures on the white board of how the process can potentially work”*
- To use Personal Learning Contracts as a learning tool, *“Every performance agreement that I did, I did with the personal contract in the back of my mind, to ask the questions, what can YOU do to perform better and to earn a piece of the cake. To see the bigger picture and to learn from it... Not only do you put your own thoughts on paper, you get to see at the end of the contract how and what you learned from it.”* And, *“These activities were managed by preparing a "Personal Learning Contract" for each of the activities. In this learning contract I focused on the following areas: "Purpose - what is my purpose?" Outcome - how shall I judge and measure my success and how well did I do? "Strategy - what actions shall I take and what did I actually do? I did however find this process very time consuming and have stopped doing it. Subconsciously I however still do it in my mind and I have implemented a process of drawing up project plans for all activities to be performed, going into more detail in those activities which I regard as important.”*
- To analyse what they actually spend their time on and what they should be spending their time on, *“I must admit that it was not always easy to focus as we consistently had other (normal) business pressures to deliver on various urgent and high profile projects. To this end the coach advised me to keep a diary of all the activities that make up a typical day so that they could be analysed and prioritised in order of importance.”*
- The need to time the promotion of new ideas appropriately, *“I have learned that there are times that the organisation is more receptive to consider new ideas i.e. when the organisation is under pressure w.r.t. margins it will be very receptive to consider forward pricing principles to win business than during other times when it is not under pressure. From this realisation I have learnt that the timing to promote ideas to the organisation should be analysed meticulously to determine the right time to put in the effort to do so. The right forums, places and people to approach should also be considered.”*

Learning how to address problems and shortcomings systematically, how to implement things and review them on an ongoing basis, how to communicate requirements more effectively, to make business processes more explicit, analysing what they actually



spend their time on and the need to time the promotion of new ideas appropriately are all normal developmental requirements for managers to fulfil their managerial roles effectively.

Reflection on how learning happened was evident as well; *“I started by selecting certain goals to achieve. Then document the process of how I am going to achieve the specific goals. By always keeping in mind what my individual makeup is, I try to use that in reaching the goals. I then evaluate and document the targets set out to do. Then I reflect on the outcome and discuss it with the coach. I started with practical operational issues that hinders me in ultimate performance and then moved towards more less tangible issues. I tried to apply some of this process and lessons learned with the other team members.”*

This in turn led to a better understanding to how they learn, *“I operate best when 1.receive input then 2.rework/reflect on it and then to 3.action it. Reflection is one of the most important critical success factors in human learning experiences.”* And, *“The thing that transpired from this uncomfortable learning experience was that I also realised that I find it to difficult to think on my feet. I needed time to let the information sink in and enable me to formalise an answer or appropriate response. To achieve the required outcome I needed to: 1.Give off-the-top-of-the-head answer but request time to get more info to formalise a value-add answer 2.Communicate the process of getting to a response 3.Explain preferred learning profile - my experience/ your experience of me shows ....., look at/ consider everything, synthesise and come back. I applied these delaying tactics in the work place and it works well”.*

The Learning Styles Inventory facilitated intrapersonal cognitive insights into learning strengths and weaknesses, *“I found the Learning Styles Inventory exercise quite informative and my scores were well interpreted by the coach and it gave me the necessary insight to focus on my strengths and be aware of my weaknesses.”* And, *“It was very interesting to answer the questionnaire to determine my learning style. The scores were very accurate and describe my characteristics and their strengths and weaknesses very well. It was very good to go through the points and reassure yourself of your strengths and to work on your weaknesses.”*

At the same time the Learning Styles Inventory facilitated insights into personal learning styles that were found to be useful, *“At some or other stage I did the learning styles inventory and we plotted it on the graph. It transpired that in the learning process I have a preference for Thinking AC (using my mind - rationalising - reflecting), Watching RO (introvert and reflection) and Doing AE (think about how this information offers new ways for us to act) and that I would intuitively utilise the Theorist (AC & RO) and Pragmatist (AC & AE) learning styles (like to learn thinking and watching and to a lesser degree by active experimentation). So what have I learnt from this? I buy into the two learning styles, it describes me best. After the little analysis above it made me realise that by combining the two learning styles - which in my case on an intuitive level - are just about equally strong - I have a very powerful ability. What is this ability? - it is my ability to understand theory, create theoretical models (theorist) and to apply these in practise (pragmatist).”*

Regret was expressed for not making the most of the learning opportunity, *“What I will do if I continue with the coaching is to make more notes from what I learn from it. I sit here now and am thinking of what I have learned, but instead I could have just looked at my notes and write an essay of 10 pages. So to sit here and write down my thoughts, is a experience all by it self again.”* And, *“This was done and I would think that as a result of operational work pressures I have not been able to focus enough on innovation and drive any innovation ideas to fruition, but in spite of this I believe the learning experience that I went through was extremely valuable and rewarding.*

There was the realisation that learning takes discipline, *“The only problem is that once you are back at your desk there are a lot of daily operational tasks and clients that needs to be satisfied. It takes a lot of discipline to go back to your file to review your actions and to implement them. You need to make time for implementation and for your coaching sessions.”*

Through the use of the Learning Styles Inventory and the coaching relationship, co-researchers developed a better understanding of their own preferred learning style and how they learn.

### 5.2.8 Coaching facilitated more self autonomy

The manifestation of a movement towards more self autonomy was the intrapersonal cognitive realisation that;

- Co-researchers had to take responsibility for the content of the coaching sessions and their own learning, *“During this process I learned that I am in control of the coaching session. In other words, I decide the tempo, what to discuss and how to implement. The coach was only there to prompt me for ideas and to steer me in the correct direction. The success/outcome of this coaching was determined by me!”* And, *“That I am in control of my progress and that I need to make time to implement the outcome of the coaching session.”* And, *“This until I realized the following: The learning experience is primarily my responsibility. We work in an environment where it is assumed that we are mature.”* And, *“This was one of the most important things that I have learned about the coaching and that was that I must each person take responsibility for their own actions/careers/tasks/environments.”* And, *“Then all of a sudden I realized that I was in charge of my 2 hour sessions every second week. I was responsible for the agenda of our coaching sessions and not my Coach.”* And, *“After my first session that I had, I discovered that not only is it a very informal way of learning but I could talk about any subject that I want.”*
- Co-researchers did not have to be victims and that they had the ability to control their own destiny within the context of the company; *“Due to the way that TSI is busy structuring, it is very obvious that T-Systems SA will soon be affected by this. A new organisational structure is therefore anticipated for TSA. The question is - how do I ensure that I have a job in the new organisation. In our session the possible future structures were debated and the best place to be analysed. ...Although I have learnt that one needs patience and have to wait out situations like these - one does not need to be the victim of the circumstances - start positioning asap - create your own destiny. Write your own job specification for the new organization.”*
- Despite affirmative action, white males could still be marketable, *“...an underlying fear of mine (sub conscious fear) - the fear of the job prospects for a 44 year old white male in South Africa - was addressed in a very profound way. My*

*core value proposition is the management of complex multi service bids. The book made me realise that I am not locked into a job in any way and that there are right and wrong ways to look for jobs. The thing that blew my mind was with my training, education, skills and experience I am still very marketable even though I am white, male and over forty. I will be able to find a job if I have to.” And, “I am still very marketable - as a white male over 40 years of age”*

- That an individual can make a difference, *“Awareness of “I can make a difference”*
- That assertiveness is not necessarily negative, *““Assertiveness does not equal threats, punishment or nastiness”*
- That they are assertive, *“I am more assertive than what I think I am. “I should start being assertive much sooner”.*
- Being aware that they demand respect, *“I lot of people respect me, my views, experience and power bases.”*
- To validate personal issues, *“I have learnt that it is all right to consider personal issues that might have an effect in the work place and that personal issues are valid reasons for certain conduct in the work place.”*
- What is expected of the individual in their position, *“I learnt that my new position it is required of me to provide the answers, put forward structures and processes and implement it.” And, “The job requires processes and principles that have to be followed and the organisation expects me to enforce these - because I was appointed to do a certain job. Therefore if I do not enforce these processes and principles I would not be doing my job.”*
- That they can work at strategic level as opposed to being just task orientated, *“I do not like to be called task orientated - I am way more than that. I dawned on me that I am strongly process and team oriented and can function on strategic level.”*
- That Servant Leadership requires assertiveness, *“We discussed this issue and used Jesus as a role-model for servant leadership. It was firmly established that servant-leaders were indeed very assertive when it came to things around principles.”*
- They have the answers to the business problems and to life in general, *“As it worked put, some of the sessions were planned from my side, most of them were actually problems that I experienced in my day to day job as a manager and my couch were very clever in his helping to solve a problem by let me come up with a answer.” And, “We have all the answers - we must decide what the best is.*

*Because work, health, spiritual and private life will always have an effect on each other balance in life is of essence. We must use what is available in our daily environment to be more successful.”*

- That it is a journey of self discovery, *“I have by no means arrived. I have a few truths and lots of unanswered questions.”*
- The need to focus on a personal agenda and not to be forced into an alternate agenda, *“For me the problem was one of pure resources, I knew what to do but just did not have the luxury of time to put all the plans together and execute. That is my focus in the future with coaching, when senior management around you force you into chaos how do you remain focused and execute according to your agenda.”*
- That there had been personal growth and development and room for further development, *“Probably one of the best satisfactions and proof that I have learnt and grown since the start of the coaching session was the feedback that I got from my manager during the performance management feedback session. The feedback was very positive and she also indicated the areas of improvement that I still need to and want to work on.”* And, *“Key growth during this experience has been nothing short of a paradigm shift. In my lifetime this is the second time I’ve changed universes! I am still not sure of the extent of this change yet, the last time I experienced anything like this it took me 2 years to uncover the fullness of the experience, and then years more to enjoy the apparently boundless newness and freedom - I have a feeling this one will take way longer.”*

The coaching relationship facilitated a move towards more self autonomy in that the co-researchers realized that they had to take responsibility for the coaching sessions and their own learning, that they did not have to be victims and that they had the ability to control their own destiny within the context of the company, that despite affirmative action white males could still be marketable, that an individual can make a difference, that they can work at a strategic level and that they have the answers to the business problems and life in general.

Intrapersonal affective emotions around autonomy included;

- Feeling more self confidence, *“It is giving me confidence”* And, *“Self confidence and self image”*

- Feeling empowered, *“The coaching project is empowering me as a manager.”*
- Feeling more powerful and maintaining control, *“I have learnt that by being the one asking the questions you are more powerful, you maintain control”*
- Being passionate and motivated, *“I have a basic understanding of the things that motivate me - and that makes me passionate. I create structure out of chaos and like to move on - this keeps me passionate and motivates me.”*

Feeling more self confident, empowered, powerful, passionate and motivated are feelings associated with self autonomy.

Intrapersonal cognitive insights lead to the realisation that behaviours should change and what the consequences would be of not changing, *“In conclusion the Executive Mentoring for me was everything about realisation. With this realisation comes an understanding of the changes that are required. It is then up to me to decide on what changes need to be done and what the consequences to me are if I do not make those changes as a person.”* Connotative changes included;

- Being more assertive by getting executive support, *“In order to help me be assertive it was decided that I should: "...Give the affected persons time to respond first before escalation "Get support from executives. I realised that the power base that you have and use has a lot to do with how far you can push your assertiveness window. I learnt that: "I do not have problems in being assertive when I use my position, reward and expert power.”*
- Being more focused on objectives that add value, *“It is helping me focus on my real objectives - to add value. It is helping me communicate stronger and with purpose. It is giving me confidence. It is helping me understand my focus and helping me stick to it. It is helping me communicate my focus stronger and to not accept things by default when passed on to me.”*
- Having the ability to say no without feeling guilty, *“I am able to say NO and not feel guilty about it.”* And, *“I am able to say NO to unfocussed request and not feel guilty about it”.*
- To break with the norm and challenge the status quo, *“You have to be prepared to break with the norm and challenge.”*

- To lead and influence the situation by asking questions, *“I have learnt that by being the one asking the questions you are more powerful, you maintain control and stay engaged, you can gently steer towards an expected result, you greatly increase your ability to influence a situation and it increases your power of persuasion as someone is lead by answering pertinent questions to get to a correct or incorrect answer or way of doing something, themselves.”*
- Learning to delegate work and follow up on it, *“Improve delegation capabilities. All the activities that I could and can delegate I do. The challenge is now to do regular and proper follow-up. This still seems to be a challenge as a result of the age old problem - lack of time. The added reality is that you can only delegate for as long as you have resources with the capability and capacity to delegate to. This has also reached its point of saturation, and given the current circumstances it is unlikely that it will change in the foreseeable future.”*
- Learning to prioritize activities and determine what is more urgent, *“I changed the above during 2003 by initially putting all activities to be performed in one of four categories: "Important & urgent "Important & not urgent "Not important & urgent "Not important & not urgent I soon realized that the majority of activities fell within the category of not important and not urgent. These activities somehow also take the most time to complete. I started a process of delegating these activities. Those activities that could not be delegated was put on a list to be left there until they became urgent, or important, or just fell off the list because I do not have the time and it is neither important nor urgent. In the process I focused mainly on those items that were important & urgent.” And, “I used Covey's time management quadrants to prioritise activities. I had to understand the real purpose of the job. Work tasks off based on importance”*
- Applying what had been learnt from coaching to subordinates or teams, *“I tried to apply some of this process and lessons learned with the other team members.” And, “The way in which some of the team leaders excelled with a bit of coaching was a direct result from the coaching I received.” And, “Another changed behaviour for me as a leader is reduced focus on task or output, and more focus on people. Although this is not an overnight occurrence, my approach is changing from telling them what to do and how to do it to a coaching approach where I support and help them (the team) to reflect and become aware of things.”*

- Teaching subordinates to use the Personal Learning Contract for their own development, *“That is were the personnel learning contract started. I did a couple of small contracts for my self and realized just how good it works. Not only do you put your own thoughts on paper, you get to see and the end of the contract how and what you learned from it. I started to use it on 2 of the people reporting to me and it worked like a charm. The first task that I contracted was a task to a guy that are on the mentorship programme to be a future manager or team leader. As soon as I explained it the purpose of the contract to him, he realized the potential of it and said he will use it for his tasking in the future.”*
- An increased willingness and ability to make and take more difficult business decisions. *“I have to face some hard emotional decisions about staff and business corrective actions that I must take. I now have learned to separate my personal emotional concerns away from my business decisions and realised that I will never be able to morally justify some of the decisions that I have to take. These are not moral decisions but hard business decisions that will secure the survival of the business going forward.”*
- The ability to separate personal emotions from business processes and principles, *“Separate process and principles from the personal issue (to be the nice guy)”*
- To communicate more effectively, *“Communicate expectations together with deadlines”* and, *“It is helping me communicate stronger and with purpose.”*
- Being more authoritative, *“Be more authoritative when I think something - not to think what the people will say. I have definitely made progress in this area. It was even mentioned by the group at the Transformational Leadership Training that I come over as very demanding and dominating, maybe even to the extent that it could be perceived as negative.”*
- Improved relationships with peers and subordinates, *“Improve relationship with peers and sub-ordinates, not become "mister nice-guy", but to earn respect for my capabilities and value-add. Through the feedback that I have received from specifically my managers, as well as my perceived acceptance in "managing" the department on a day-to-day basis and in meetings, I believe that I have grown in this aspect. The real challenge is if I can sustain this, and specifically during the next few months whether this can improve and grow during the process of change.”*



- To identify key role players and to manage the relationship with them, *“The role players on the different levels were identified and my relationships and their opinions of my abilities analysed. It was decided that I should target these persons and make sure that I stay on their radar screens. This was done and is working well.”*
- Being less affected by what other people say and think, *“I am free, because I am less affected by what people say and think about me. I am responsible for my own happiness and freedom.”*
- Not taking responsibility for other people’s lives, *“Other’s happiness is their own responsibility. As a leader I can offer empathy, a characteristic I have in abundance. For the rest, people need to deal with their own deamons.”*
- Living a more balanced life, *“Get more balance in my life in time used between work, family and personal I believe that I have gone a long way in achieving this. I have changed my working hours from (05:00 to 20:00) to (08:30 to 18:00). The evenings I use to support my wife with our baby boy and giving more attention to her. Weekends is spent with the family, doing almost nothing. I would like to still work on building in some private time for myself, doing the things that I want to do.”*
- Reading more and watching less TV, *“Read more - not wasting time sitting in front of the TV when everybody else is asleep. There has been a definite improvement in this. It is however also time consuming. I have a stack of books and magazines that I want to work through and I am giving it my best to work through this. As far as the TV goes, if I watch something, it is because it was a decision to do this and then usually together with my wife.”*
- Believing in themselves again and that they can make a difference, *“I started to believe in myself again that I can make a difference in these challenging times we are facing as a global ITC company.”*
- Being more comfortable to take risks, experiment and make more mistakes, *“Be comfortable to take risks, experiment, and make mistakes (according to my definition, issues around 'self')”*
- Just being who you are, *“The only thing left to do as I am is be. Aint it great?”*
- Applying appropriate delay tactics, *“To achieve the required outcome I needed to: Give off-the-top-of-the-head answer but request time to get more info to formalise*

*a value-add answer. Communicate the process of getting to a response. Explain preferred learning profile – my experience/ your experience of me shows ....., look at/ consider everything, synthesise and come back. I applied these delaying tactics in the work place and it works well – honesty and delivery in the time “bought” is key.”*

- To recognize and trust individual feelings, intuition and experience and use it to their advantage, *“I learnt that I should trust my feelings around situations and use it to lower stress by putting actions in place sooner than later to counter the situation dictated by my intuition. These feelings (instinct and intuition) has been developed over years through experience, learning from good and bad situations, knowledge of people and their way of doing things, exploring and study. I must use it to my advantage. I learnt that this feeling is very easily recognisable and is indicated by a risen level of stress. I have to learn to trust this intuition and act on it sooner than later.”*
- To become more aware without having to change things immediately, *“Although I decided to explore alternatives and break from my current reality, unconsciously my black and white nature wanted to take over, and find solutions and answers for all my problems. This created just more questions and misery. Again through our coaching sessions I learnt to become aware of what is happening around me and to me, with out trying to change it immediately.”*

Connotative changes that supported a move towards more self autonomy in the co-researchers were manifested in things like being more focused on objectives that add value, having the ability to say no without feeling guilty, breaking the norm and challenging the status quo, learning to delegate work and follow up on it, learning to prioritize activities and determine what is more urgent, an increased willingness and ability to make and take more difficult business decisions, the ability to separate personal emotions from business processes and principles, an increased willingness and ability to make and take more difficult business decisions, being more comfortable to take risks, experiment and make more mistakes and believing in themselves again and that they can make a difference.

### 5.2.9 Co-researchers moved into more complex strategic thinking and acting

The coaching experience provided the impetus to move into higher levels of complexity, *“The experience was tremendous and confirmed that it indeed provided the necessary impetus (stimuli) to move into a higher level of complexity.”* Intrapersonal cognitive insights and questions that stemmed from this realisation included;

- What makes it possible for CEO's to manage large companies effectively? What is it that they do? *“The question I asked myself was how does CEOs get through their daily tasks and are able to manage large companies effectively. There are only 24 hours in a day after all. There must be some technique that they apply that enables them to focus on right stuff.”*
- Where and how they need to add value to the organization and that more work needs to be done in this area, *“Need to learn more about IT in general, specific the T-Systems environment, to understand business better so that I can add better value, not just from a financial point of view. I am not comfortable that I have made enough progress in this area and it is therefore a specific point of development for me during 2004.”* And, *“Now that I know how to create time and delay answers what do I with this time? How do I add value – where do I get involved to add value? – What is expected of me as a manager in term of value adding activities? What is the next level that I might not be aware off where I must add value?”*
- The need to extract oneself from the detailed operations and to reflect more, *“The programme also made me realise that I need to take time to reflect and extract myself from the detailed operations.”*
- The need to provide thought leadership to the team, *“An example would be to attend a meeting and provide the required though leadership and guidance to the team but to ensure that when I leave the meeting I am the only person that does not have any tasks to execute.”*
- To continuously reflect on the strategy and take corrective action, *“I will also have to learn to reflect on current strategy to take corrective actions during the year.”*

- To learn to say no and to stop focusing on day-to-day operational issues and rather focus on strategic issues, *“Need to learn to say no and to stop worrying about day-to-day activities and focus mainly on strategic matters. As mentioned above, I have stopped to worry about day-to-day activities, but I have not yet learnt to say no. I still need to work on this.”*
- To continue to grow in order to take on more complex business challenges, *“The realisation of the points discussed in this essay alone justify why the Executive Coaching was worth the effort and time. The next challenge is to take the interaction up to a new level that will allow me to grow and accept larger and more complex business challenges.”*
- The realisation that strategic documents are sometimes just filed and forgotten about, *“The strategic plan for each business unit was drawn up and filed in a filing system! They were never used to determine whether the business unit is on track according to the strategic plan.”*
- The need to implement and continuously review, *“I big lesson to me was that you need to implement what you believe in and that you need to review it from time to time.”*
- That without the buy-in from staff nothing is achieved, *“You also must get the buy-in from your personnel, otherwise you wouldn't achieve a thing.”*
- That there is a difference between the espoused theory and the theory in use, *“The first problem was to get a correct and up-to-date scorecard within the company. Nobody seems to have one...”*
- The need to design and implement organizational structures and processes, *“I learnt that my new position it is required of me to provide the answers, put forward structures and processes and implement it.”*
- The need for a team based approach to work, *“The organisation can not afford managers only. The manager should be a senior member of the team (the captain) who has to be good enough to make the team in their specialist position first and thereafter fulfil the role of the captain – the manager must be prepared to roll up his sleeves and do the hard work required of their specialist position and at the same manage (captain) the team.”*

- The need to lead differently, *“Leadership doesn’t mean power over a team. Leadership means connecting with, and serving people so that they can contribute what they can. This idea of servant leadership is about letting others be.”*

Coaching helped the co-researchers gain certain insights that allowed them to start thinking more strategically. There was the realisation that they had to become more strategic and ask more strategic questions. They started to ask what makes it possible for CEO’s to manage large companies effectively and where and how they need to add value to the organization. There was the realisation that they needed to extract themselves from the detailed operations and to reflect more, to continuously reflect on the strategy and take corrective action, that strategic documents are sometimes just filed and forgotten about and as a result there is a difference between the espoused theory and the theory in use.

Evidence of being able to work with more complex strategic issues included;

- The ability to distinguish between operational and strategic issues, *“Improve ability to distinguish between day-to-day and strategic issues. I believe that I have managed to do this. The reality is that there are so many strategic issues to attend to at the moment that I do not have the luxury to attend to day-to-day activities, which can also become a problem if not managed well”*
- Researching and learning about innovation and its importance for long term sustainability, *“In aligning with the company's strategic business objectives and themes, I decided that it was crucial to focus on innovation for the long-term survival of the business. I bought some books to see what the experts say about innovation and to better understand the concepts and I worked through some case studies. I developed a passion for innovation the more I read about it and the more I discussed it with my coach and colleagues. Prior to my coaching programme I never took cognizance of the need for innovation in any business for it to survive well into the future and statistically most businesses do not exist for longer than twenty years without serious innovation (radical innovation). I learned about constructive and destructive innovation and although destructive innovation is often perceived to be extremely negative and de-motivating, I managed to*

*understand it and turn it into a positive and also communicated this as such to many of my colleagues who seemed to have given it their support.”*

- Designing and implementing a Balanced Score Card as well as governance structures, *“To improve my strategic thinking and implementation competencies. A very difficult topic, for me, but a very exiting one. The outcome for this task was that a strategic plan was in place for CS and that it must reflect our themes and BSC.”* And, *“Balanced Scorecard. We decided to tackle this project because it would add value to myself in terms of what needs to be achieved within my department to compliment the companies balanced scorecard. The first problem was to get a correct and up-to-date scorecard within the company. Nobody seems to have one and at the end I decided to take what I could get and work with it. In the beginning it seems like a huge task because every point on the BSC needed to be addressed and every point cascades into more actions within every department. We broke it down into manageable parts/actions en decided how I must address every point. We discussed every point carefully and decided on an action plan. Because of the amount of information this task spanned over a few sessions. This method definitely helped me not to jump in head over heels and start with the task. I carefully plan the task at hand and delegate where necessary. Governance and feedback systems were put in place to ensure results and to manage deviations during the process.”*
- Co-creating a business plan that everybody bought into, *“On 9/12/2003 my team and I went through a full day working session during which we prepared a detailed plan for 2004. We went through a process to determine the important, non-important and strategic activities within Controlling and for which Controlling is responsible. The outcome was a spreadsheet indicating all activities that must be done and also who is responsible for what. Everybody bought into the plan!”*
- Developing a meaningful vision that was supported by staff and senior management, *“I even manage to put on paper a meaningful vision for the "lab & soft distribution team” that supported the company vision and received the buy in from all team members and DSS line managers.”*
- Implementing corporate structures and business processes to implement their strategies and plans, *“Improve structure within my department, even if it means that I need to get other/new/more people with the correct capability that I do not*

*have to think, worry, follow up and review all tasks delegated. With the appointment of a new person in the department I believe that I have gone a long way in achieving this. The reality however is that we do not have enough capacity to attend to all the matters that we have to attend to and that we are also not always able to put in the necessary quality that I expect.”*

- Thinking about more strategic ways to use the company’s core competencies, *“Move the organisation’s business horizontally along service disciplines (HR, Fin etc) by using its unique and transferable skills and capabilities obtained in IT services. In an effort to think out of the box I am of the opinion that the organisation should consider itself to be more than only an IT organisation – It is excellent in multiple service line outsourcing – complex multiple service line offerings. Why do we not consider ourselves to be outsourcing experts – the basics stay the same for any classic outsourcing scenario = asset and staff take-over, possible goodwill payment, create economies of scale, use bulk buying power, share facilities and resources between customers, use assets and staff to render services back to client against objectively measured service level agreements. We know how to do these things – why not move into other environments i.e. HR payroll, HR admin, accounting or even cleaning services...The tools, techniques and resources should basically be the same. Why do I say this? I am of the opinion that if we use the tools and techniques promoted in the “What is the colour of your parachute” book to determine the transferable skills of the organisation (in stead of a person) in the outsourcing environment – one would most probably find that these are the same or very close to what is needed to outsource any environment regardless of the technology or process”*

Designing and implementing a Balanced Score Card as well as governance structures, co-creating a business plan that everybody bought into, developing a meaningful vision that was supported by staff and senior management, implementing corporate structures and business processes to implement their strategies and plans and thinking about more strategic ways to use the company’s core competencies are all evidence of co-researchers taking on more strategic and complex work.

Even the coaching relationship was expected to move to a higher level, a move from pure reflective conversations to the coach “shadowing” the coachee. *“Some of us*

*might now be ready to be "shadowed", which will take coaching to the next level." And, "I think we are at a junction now with my coaching where we can take it a step further. Where we take coaching into the realm of my daily job and interactions, to observe and identify areas for further development. We should allow Lloyd into our management forums to gather first hand knowledge of my leadership, behaviour and relationships within the context of our corporate dynamics." And, "I think there should be more critical feedback from the coach, how can this be achieved well perhaps a more intrusive approach? Sit in on meetings, chat to peers about the person and peoples perspectives of the person, why do they act the way they do. I think a more hands on approach perhaps twice a year would be "interesting"."*

#### **5.2.10 Coaching was worthwhile and a good investment for the company**

On a cognitive level coaching was experienced as;

- Tremendous, *"The experience was tremendous and confirmed that it indeed provided the necessary impetus (stimuli) to move into a higher level of complexity." "To conclude I would say that I have learned a heck of a lot, nothing really earth shattering, but enormous in impact."*
- Justified, *"The realisation of the points discussed in this essay alone justify why the Executive Coaching was worth the effort and time."*
- Beyond value, *"Looking back over the past few months I can confidently say that coaching has catalyzed and in most cases accelerated many aspects of learning that has originated in other areas and for this reason has been beyond value."*
- That it was a good investment on behalf of the company, *"T-Systems will experience return on investment regarding this coaching programme." "As an HR OD consultant I believe in treating the person at work as a "whole". Integrate his various selves with the work persona, rather than coaxing him with money and status to get the best possible performance from him. The coaching methodology underwrites this 100%. "No man is an island". Whether coaching for performance or development, no better investment can be made to a company's human capital."*

Co-researchers believed that the coaching experience was tremendous, justified, and beyond value and that it was a good investment by the company.



On an affective level coaching led to feelings of;

- Gratefulness, *“Looking back, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to undergo coaching. I certainly count it as a highlight in my career thus far, and one of the best things that happened to me in 2003. I am grateful to my company and my manager for affording me the chance to develop myself in this way, and to my coach for his time, insight and patience.”*
- Thankfulness and Peace, *“I can’t say I would not have survived the year without coaching, or would have been divorced by now, without coaching. What I can say is that where there should have been a scar there is now thankfulness and peace.”*

Co-researchers found that the coaching experience left them with a feeling of thankfulness and peace as well as being grateful for the opportunity to undergo coaching.

### **5.3 Imaginative variation**

Through imaginative variation an attempt is made to try to understand how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced. Here the critical question is how did the experience of the phenomenon come to be what it is?

Many of the co-researchers came into the coaching experience feeling that they had been prejudged and “labelled.” This stemmed from the fact that a number of them had been put through psychological assessments or assessment centers about a year prior to joining the coaching programme, *“By incorporating the demonstrated results from previous sessions namely transformational leadership & Kiewietskroon evaluation, in conjunction with industrial psychologist.”* As a result of these assessments, many of the co-researchers had transferred power from themselves to the psychologists. There is no doubt that the transference of personal power onto the coach took place as well. There were doubts about the coach’s abilities, his credibility, his expertise, his agenda

and an expectation of what is the coach going to do for me? The coach like, the psychologists, was seen as an “expert who could fix them”, or do something for them.

In the second coaching session each co-researcher was invited to use the assessment data and suggested developmental areas as input if it was meaningful to them or to ignore it if it was not meaningful. They were then asked to tell the coach “their” stories, starting from when they were born to the present point in time, *“The ability to go through my life history with the mentor was a good exercise for me as it helped me realise where I had come from and where I was. Being a very discontented person by nature this put my life into the proper perspective.”* Together the coach and co-researchers explored the life stories. Who were their parents, where were they born, what influence did that have on their lives, who were significant people in their lives as they grew up, where did they go to school and university, why or how did they choose this career or this company, what led to them being religious, non-religious, heterosexual, homosexual, single or married, what were they passionate about, did they have children, what influence did children have on them, the joys, the sorrows, the tragedies, life, health, death, fears, anxieties, regrets and future hopes? As they told their stories and started to reflect on the stories, a beautiful curiosity about themselves started to arise. The more co-researchers were able to tell their stories in a non-judgmental, open, curious way to another human being, the more spontaneous and animated they became. *“During this time my coach constantly helped me to explore my thoughts and actions that made the experience quite enjoyable and rewarding which, then positively motivated me...”* They were free to explore this amazing mystery called the “self”. There was no need to defend who they were, they could just explore, and they could be as honest or dishonest as they wanted to be. They were free to tell their story in a non-judgmental way. What was important was that it was their “authentic” story, not somebody else’s story about them. For many it was the first time that they could tell their story so “honestly” to another human being, because there was no emotional attachment or investment. There was just open curiosity and enquiry. At the same time, the coach shared his life story and co-researchers were free to enquire into his story. The sharing of life stories created a vulnerable space where two human beings could explore each other’s histories. Here there was no expert, there was only two people enquiring into each other’s stories. By sharing his story the coach made himself vulnerable and open. In a sense, the ability to tell their stories and to

reflect on them in an open way was experienced as a very empowering experience. It was a small step in reclaiming responsibility for their lives. It was their interpretation of their lives and not an external interpretation.

Each co-researcher was asked to complete the Learning Styles Inventory at the start of the coaching project. The coach and coachee then worked through the coachee's scores and what their learning profiles meant. (Once again this highlights the dependency, because the Learning Styles Inventory was designed to be a self-assessment tool.) The coach in turn shared his Learning Styles profile with each of the coachees. The assumption being that if all the learning styles were made explicit, learning could be more effective. Co-researchers found it to be a meaningful exercise in that they started to have a better understanding of how and why they learnt in the way they do. At the same time they had an understanding of what the coach's profile was and what his learning preference was. Co-researchers knew as much about the coach as the coach knew about them. The coach was not experienced as an expert doing something to them. More importantly, the coach did not want to "fix" them. The coach was just a companion who could journey and explore their lives with them in an open enquiring way.

Through them telling their stories in a non-judgmental way and exploring their learning styles, and the coach telling his story and sharing his learning style, the open curiosity and enquiry lead to the building of a more trusting relationship. As the trust grew, so did the willingness to reflect and enquire. The reflection started off around day-to-day work issues, and then moved onto the self, the self in relation to others and even onto the higher self or God, the way they learn and the next level of work that they should be doing. With the reflection, enquiry and trust, comes the awareness of what they believe, what they feel and why they behave as they do.

Because co-researchers come to this awareness by themselves, they start to take more responsibility for their own lives. They realize that they are responsible for who they are, and for what they will become. It is their choice. It is not as a result of someone else's doing. People have an influence, yes, but in the final analysis they are responsible for their own lives and the choices they make. Hence the dawning of the

truth that the coach would do nothing for them, except sincerely enquiring and pointing out their defences regarding their self-awareness and their underlying assumptions. This brought about the realisation that they must take responsibility for their own learning agenda and growth. This led to co-researchers dropping their dependency and starting to reclaim their personal power.

Through the building of a trusting, non judgmental relationship, a growing ability to reflect and the willingness to take personal responsibility for their own learning and development, the co-researchers became more willing to experiment with alternative ways of thinking and behaving which, led to more effective learning and growth. Active experimentation in a safe and trusting environment was both exciting and scary. Emotions ranged from the sheer hell of experimenting with new ways of conceptualizing things (new constructs), especially when it is something as personal as a belief about God or the possibility that one could love two people at the same time, to the joy of realizing that your “*otherness – being Gay*” is actually a gift that can make you more effective in the workplace.

#### **5.4 Synthesis of the meaning and essences of the experiences**

This is the final step of the phenomenological model and is an integration of the composite textural and composite structural descriptions. This integration leads to a synthesis of the meaning and essences of the experience of the group.

A number of the co-researchers started the coaching relationship deeply entrenched in patterns of dependency that included the transference of power. The transference of power was displayed in one of two dominant patterns. The first pattern was that they did not want to take responsibility for their own behaviour or the process. They felt cynical about what value the coach could add to their lives and to the business. The cynicism, moreover, stemmed from the fact that many of them were nominated by their managers as a consequence of an assessment centre they had attended about twelve months prior to the coaching programme. As a result of these assessments and their transference of power to the psychologists, they felt labelled and judged. As one co-researcher put it, “*As coaching or informal tuition was a new concept to me, my first reaction when introduced to coaching was that of uncertainty towards my abilities*

*as line and technical manager. The assumption was that all managers not performing, was targeted for some kind of evaluation sessions with some outsider that would categorized the target group of managers in pre defined blocks.” Another expressed the following, “This “feeling” was further enhanced by being “interrogated, my strengths and weaknesses discussed” in front of a number of people...” Was management serious about this process or was it just another fad? For these co-researchers there was a strong feeling of being a victim, this was just another “thing” that was being done to them. They reluctantly got into coaching because if they did not join the programme they could receive another “label”.*

The second transfer pattern was the unrealistic expectations of what the coach could do for them. There was the expectation that as the “expert”, the coach would be teaching them a tremendous amount. *“Secondly I was also brand new in a new job and I needed to gain some content knowledge about the subject - fast. I was in the lucky position that my coach came from the same background. Since I had a small baby, studying was not an option at that time and I was very exited that I would be able to learn from him as I go along and draw from his experiences in similar fields.”*

Again one can see the transference of power coming through. What is the coach going to do for me? The responsibility for success lies with the coach not with them. Coaching is seen as a possible quick fix or shortcut in the experiential learning process. There was even an expectation of receiving *“formal learning documentation”*; an expectation entrenched in the “training paradigm”. In this paradigm the expert (the trainer, lecturer or teacher) has all the knowledge and imparts that knowledge to the student or pupil. There was the transference of power and responsibility from coachee to coach.

At the first coaching session the co-researchers were invited to either use the feedback they had received from the assessment centres and their managers, or to ignore it. It was made clear to them that they were responsible for their own learning and development, which meant that they were free to use the feedback if they found it meaningful or to ignore it if it had no personal meaning for them. The next step was to get to know each other by getting the co-researchers to tell the coach “their” life stories and the coach telling his life story in return. The mutual exploration of the life stories

in an open enquiring and inquisitive way, lead to a beautiful curiosity about who and what they were. The more they experienced the ability to tell and explore their stories in a non-judgmental open way, the more they were willing to investigate the mystery of the “self”. Through the mutual exploration of their stories, defences started to drop and a sense of vulnerability started to set in. Vulnerability in the sense that, there was a realisation that both coach and coachee were only human. There was a growing realisation that there was no “expert”, only a group of people who are on a journey of exploration. An exploration into this thing called life, and the mystery of being human and all that that entails.

Through telling, exploring and enquiring into each other’s stories a relationship started to form between the coach and the co-researchers. For the co-researchers the building of a trusting relationship was vital to the success of the coaching process. Without the establishment of such a relationship it was felt that it would not have been possible to learn. A trusting relationship was seen as the foundation of everything that was to follow.

As the trust grew so did the willingness to enquire and reflect at various levels. One of the real dangers of the English language, and in writing up a research report, is that the process appears to be a linear progression. Nothing could be further from the truth. Given the limitations of report writing, it only appears that way. A more truthful account would be to conceive of the process as a spiral journey. There are levels of progression and regression in the spiral journey. It is not a neat linear progression, but a complex up and down movement along the spiral. There was movement and development up the spiral, but it was dynamic. This was particularly true when it came to reflection. The level of reflection depended on the level of trust existing at that point and fluctuated from task-based reflection, through to reflection on the higher self. The level of reflection depended on where the co-researchers found themselves on that day, how they felt, how busy they were and their energy levels. Be that as it may, co-researchers started to appreciate the value and power of reflection. For many, reflection was a new experience and a vital new skill to learn. Given that they are so task and output driven, they had never afforded themselves the opportunity or “luxury” to reflect even though they knew that they needed to. Coaching provided a disciplined and structured time and place for them to reflect.

Reflection was centered on four main themes; a growing awareness of the self, the self in relation to others, the Higher Self and learning. The first level of reflection was around a growing awareness about the “self”. There was the emergent recognition that the “self” was a belief system that had either been adopted about themselves or accepted from others. It was the dawning that in many instances the “self” was the product of social conditioning. This in turn led to co-researchers having to deconstruct their understanding of the “self”. This deconstruction included such fundamental beliefs as my relationship to God, what is right and wrong for me, what is marriage, is it possible to love two people at the same time, what’s it mean to be gay in the workplace, am I good enough, how have I become these labels that have been given to me, the continuous need to perform and succeed to prove myself, am I more than pure IQ, logic and reason, how have my failures resulted in me getting stuck with a certain self image?

Within the context of an open, enquiring and trusting relationship, coaching provided a safe environment where the deconstruction of these fundamental beliefs could take place. More importantly, however, is that coaching provided the environment and support for the reconstruction and experimentation with new beliefs and insights. The coach did not do the work; the coach only provided the support for the work to be done by the co-researchers. This reconstruction included, creating their own belief systems about God, marriage, exploring alternative religious belief systems which was not possible before, being gay and how it contributed to leadership, learning to forgive oneself for past failures and to move on. These reconstructed beliefs of the “self” were their own, free from the labels and beliefs that other people had imposed on them. This brought with it a feeling of freedom and lightness. There was the joy of discovering a “truer self” which had more meaning for them.

The second level of reflection was around a growing awareness of the self in relation to others. Having realized how their self-concept had often been as a result of social conditioning, the co-researchers became more aware of how their own feelings, beliefs and behaviours had an impact on their teams and clients. There was the awareness that their own insecurities and need to succeed and perform, the need to be liked, fear of rejection and failure, and their own agendas were often being projected onto their

teams and management. Once again, within the context of the coaching relationship they were able to reconstruct their belief systems and explore and experiment with alternative behaviours. New behaviours included, more proactive communication and interaction with management, to give their teams the opportunity to develop and learn, succeed and fail, transferring responsibility and accountability on to the teams, making people more responsible for their own development, reducing the focus on task and output, to learning to coach and support teams to reflect and become more aware of things, making use of a more facilitative approach to management. More importantly there was the awareness that people are not labels, but individuals who are different and unique, just as they are unique. In response to this there was more of a willingness to be open to others instead of labelling them.

For a few co-researchers the level of awareness extended to the transpersonal realm. This level of awareness is closely related to the level of self awareness as the one leads into the other and vice versa. Awareness of the self was intimately related to the concept of God. This is not uncommon amongst people who have had a strong religious upbringing. Here the tension was between what had been taught, via various institutions and belief systems, and the person's actual experience. There was a clash between the belief system and the felt experience. This led to questioning and challenging the old belief system about God and then the creation of a new belief system via reflection, deconstruction and active experimentation. The transpersonal awareness led to the realization that self is not limited to the mind. This immediately raises the question, "well then who am I?" For them it is the realization that who they are is not limited to the body and the mind, there is the experiential realization that "I am." In all major spiritual traditions the "I am" is recognized as the Higher Self, the realization that God and I are one. Once again there is strong evidence that within the context of an open, enquiring and trusting coaching relationship there is the freedom to reflect (deconstruct) and to experiment (reconstruct) with beliefs, feelings and behaviours.

The fourth level of awareness centred on learning. The initial awareness was brought about by making use of the Learning Styles Inventory. Each co-researcher was asked to complete the Learning Styles Inventory. The coach and co-researchers then worked through the scores to determine their preferred learning style. The coach in turn shared



his Learning Styles profile with each of the coachees, the assumption being that if all the learning styles were made explicit, learning could be more effective. Co-researchers found it to be a meaningful exercise in that they started to have a better understanding of how and why they learnt in the way they do. At the same time they had an understanding of what the coach's profile was and what his learning preference was. This created a level playing field. They knew as much about the coach as the coach knew about them. The coach was not an expert doing something to them. The coach was just a companion who could journey and explore their lives with them. By being made aware of their learning style they increased the awareness about themselves. The awareness varied from being aware of their strengths and weaknesses to realizing that they have powerful abilities, like conceptualization skills and the ability to apply those concepts in practice.

Understanding their preferred learning style and the experiential learning processes enabled co-researchers to experiment and work with Personal Learning Contracts in their day-to-day work environments. In so doing the learning experience was made explicit. This in turn enabled co-researchers to start reflecting on how they learn. Hence, the realization for many of the co-researchers of how important reflection was for effective learning. Given the fact that the co-researchers work in an information technology company, the emphasis had always been on doing (concrete experience) and learning new technologies (abstract conceptualization). They learnt new technologies and applied them in an environment that emphasizes and rewards output. What was missing in their learning experience was the ability to reflect and to actively experiment with new thinking, beliefs, feelings and behaviours. Once again coaching provided a safe space where co-researchers could reflect on and experiment with their own learning in an explicit way. It was this reflection and active experimentation that led to learning and personal growth. *"The learning I have experienced in this time through coaching can not be accounted for in terms of some "desirable business or efficiency based outcome" or some improved test score - it has been a deeply personal journey which has resulted in a more whole being and as a natural result a more focused and efficient employee. This seems counter culture, but it's true."*

As the co-researchers became more self-aware, aware of the self in relation to others, the Higher Self and about how they learn, they moved from dependency to more self

autonomy. As a result of the reflection, enquiry and trust, co-researchers became aware of what they believed, what they felt and why they behaved like they do. Because co-researchers came to this awareness by themselves they started to take responsibility for their own lives. In so doing they transferred the power back from the coach to themselves. The truth suddenly dawned on them that the coach would do nothing for them except sincerely enquiring and pointing out their defences regarding their self-awareness and their underlying assumptions. Hence the movement away from “what can the coach do for me?” to “what can I do?” The first manifestation of the movement away from dependency to self autonomy was when the co-researchers started taking responsibility for their own learning and setting their own agendas for the coaching sessions. There was even the “owning” of the fact that they should have changed the coaching approach when they realized that it was not working for them. They started to own their own projections.

As they started to take more responsibility and accountability for their own lives, the self autonomy started to expand into areas such as being more assertive, empowered and confident. Being more assertive and confident led to co-researchers becoming more focused on what is expected of them, what they have to deliver and what their parameters are. Hence they were more able and confident to say no. Through reflection co-researchers were able to identify what their real value-add to the company was, and with that came a feeling of being more empowered. This in turn gave them more confidence to break with the norm and to challenge. The rise in confidence and assertiveness as well as the awareness of themselves in relation to others made co-researchers more willing to delegate, to push responsibility and accountability down to the level of where the work should be done. By delegating some of the day-to-day activities, co-researchers started to apply what they had learnt from coaching by starting to coach their own teams and subordinates. Applied learning is a powerful example of people becoming more self autonomous.

As self autonomy grew, co-researchers started to shed the victim mentality. Instead of sitting around and waiting to see what would happen in an organizational restructure, certain co-researchers started to experiment with alternative ideas of how to influence the outcome. Given the current socio-political environment in South Africa, where affirmative action is the order of the day, a white male victim mentality prevails. For

specific co-researchers the shedding of the white male victim mentality was a truly liberating experience. There was the realisation that “*with my training, education, skills and experience I am still very marketable even though I am white, male and over forty.*” The growth in self autonomy was confirmed by the feedback from managers and peers.

Through the building of a trusting, non-judgmental relationship, a growing ability to reflect and the willingness to take personal responsibility for their own learning and development the co-researchers became more willing to experiment with alternative ways of thinking and behaving. This experimentation was evident in the way they conceived and behaved towards themselves, other people, the Higher Self, the way they learnt which in turn led to more autonomous behaviour.

More autonomous behaviour, reflection and active experimentation was extended into more complex levels of work. As co-researchers started to question the value that they added to the organization they started to develop more strategic levels of thinking and behaviour. The first step was to start thinking beyond their functional areas into understanding the business as a whole, to think in terms of processes instead of isolated functions. In doing that, co-researchers were able to improve their ability to distinguish between day-to-day and strategic issues. Once again there was the realization that they could only do this effectively if they took the time to extract themselves from the detailed operations and reflected on what they were doing. This in turn enabled them to start aligning themselves with the company’s strategic business objectives and themes, to reflect on the current strategy and to take corrective action where necessary.

Despite the public confession that the company had a Balanced Scorecard in place, there was evidence that some co-researchers were starting to work with the Balanced Scorecard for the first time. When they tried to find the company Balanced Scorecard they could not find it. Like most organizations there was a difference between the espoused theory and the theory in use. This made it difficult for them to align their functional area with that of the company. Despite this, they started to design Balanced Scorecards for their functional area of responsibility. In doing that, they started to experience the difficulties involved with trying to operationalise strategic thinking and

then to align people with those strategic thrusts. This in turn raised an awareness of the difficulties and complexity involved in leading large complex organizations at a more strategic level. Again there was the realization that action without disciplined review and reflection was a useless activity. What is the use of a strategic plan when it is not used to determine whether the business unit is on track with the desired strategy or not? At this level review and reflection became even more critical. There was the joy of having developed a strategic vision and plan which was aligned with the company's vision and getting the team to buy into the vision and plan.

A number of co-researchers realized that they had to put certain organizational structures and processes in place in order to achieve their desired strategies. Strategies are often not realizable because the appropriate structures and processes are not in place to support the strategy. Even worse is the fact that the existing structures and processes actually work against the desired strategy.

In conclusion the coaching experience is best summed up in the words of my co-researchers, *"The aims that I set out for myself for coaching did not materialise. I did not get the content I was aiming for; instead I got the me I was looking for. I can't say I would not have survived the year without coaching, or would have been divorced by now, without coaching. What I can say is that where there should have been a scar there is now thankfulness and peace."* And, *"The context of the learning that I speak about in this essay is very important. There is no doubt that the coaching experience has contributed significantly to my learning (more like development) in this period... Coaching has been a place that has provided learning in its own right; it has also been a place where experience, opinion, problem and question find competent debate, reflection and perspective.... The learning I have experienced in this time through coaching can not be accounted for in terms of some "desirable business or efficiency based outcome" or some improved test score - it has been a deeply personal journey which has resulted in a more whole being and as a natural result a more focused and efficient employee. This seems counter culture, but it's true."*

## 5.5 Integrity of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model

Although this research project never set out to test the integrity of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, it is worth noting that the research evidence does seem to support the integrity of the model. There is evidence that people explored the Upper-Left Quadrant in some detail. They wrote about their inner feelings and cognitive insights. *“Again through our coaching sessions I learnt to become aware of what is happening around me and to me, with out trying to change it immediately. I was creating everything I was trying to move away from again! I then became aware of the feelings and thoughts that I experienced, as well as their effect on me.”* This reflection happened on various levels of consciousness. *“My journey turned from questioning my marriage to religious concepts to my belief systems and eventually the concept of self... This realisation did not fit in at all with all my belief systems or the image I have of myself! It is just not on! This fact, which was only articulated in my mind, was threatening to destroy my life as well as my mind.”* There was even evidence of people moving into the transpersonal level of consciousness. *“My coaching sessions became blissful spiritual reawakening moments. Together we explored different options and created new realities. Although I decided to explore alternatives and break from my current reality, unconsciously my black and white nature wanted to take over, and find solutions and answers for all my problems. This created just more questions and misery.... My struggle with God became almost unbearable. I was caught in a hell of what I have been taught by institutions and traditions”*

There was the changing of personal behaviours which falls into the Upper Right Hand Quadrant. This changed behaviour varied from being more focused, *“It is helping me focus on my real objectives - to add value. It is helping me communicate stronger and with purpose. It is giving me confidence. It is helping me understand my focus and helping me stick to it. It is helping me communicate my focus stronger and to not accept things by default when passed on to me.”*, to breaking with the norm and challenging the status quo, *“You have to be prepared to break with the norm and challenge.”* There was evidence of an increased ability to delegate, *“Improve delegation capabilities. All the activities that I could and can delegate I do.”* And an

increased willingness and ability to make and take more difficult business decisions. *“I have to face some hard emotional decisions about staff and business corrective actions that I must take. I now have learned to separate my personal emotional concerns away from my business decisions and realised that I will never be able to morally justify some of the decisions that I have to take. These are not moral decisions but hard business decisions that will secure the survival of the business going forward.”*

There was the realization that social norms and group culture, which is the domain of the Lower-Left Quadrant, does actually have an impact on the individual. The co-researchers felt and realised how certain belief systems were inherited or taken in from others, *“I was caught in a hell of what I have been taught by institutions and traditions. Those things created my own belief systems of what is wrong and what are right vs what I knew I felt.”* And *“The system was fundamentally and blindly based on other people's ideas of what the world and salvation was about.”* And, *“Other people, and society at large, have influenced who I am and what I believe about myself. My 'self' was based on the labels I was given, or I assumed.”* On a corporate level there was the realisation of how destructive or constructive corporate politics could be, *“Being a “what you see is what you get” type of person I tend not to play too many corporate games, which is not bad in itself, but it has the consequence that at times I do not play at all and that is fatal. I realized that I will have to apply conscious effort to be in the game, to market what I/we do, to improve communications and not only be the quiet performer.”* There was the development of a meaningful vision that was supported by staff and senior management, *“I even manage to put on paper a meaningful vision for the “lab & soft distribution team” that supported the company vision and received the buy in from all team members and DSS line managers.”* All of these are examples of activities in the Lower-Left Quadrant.

There was the implementation of corporate structures and business processes to implement their strategies and plans, *“Improve structure within my department, even if it means that I need to get other/new/more people with the correct capability that I do not have to think, worry, follow up and review all tasks delegated. With the appointment of a new person in the department I believe that I have gone a long way*

*in achieving this. The reality however is that we do not have enough capacity to attend to all the matters that we have to attend to and that we are also not always able to put in the necessary quality that I expect.”* There was the designing and implementation of a Balanced Score Card as well as governance structures, *“To improve my strategic thinking and implementation competencies. A very difficult topic, for me, but a very exiting one. The outcome for this task was that a strategic plan was in place for CS and that it must reflect our themes and BSC.”* And, *“Balanced Scorecard. We decided to tackle this project because it would add value to myself in terms of what needs to be achieved within my department to compliment the companies balanced scorecard. The first problem was to get a correct and up-to-date scorecard within the company. Nobody seems to have one and at the end I decided to take what I could get and work with it. In the beginning it seems like a huge task because every point on the BSC needed to be addressed and every point cascades into more actions within every department. We broke it down into manageable parts/actions en decided how I must address every point. We discussed every point carefully and decided on an action plan. Because of the amount of information this task spanned over a few sessions. This method definitely helped me not to jump in head over heels and start with the task. I carefully plan the task at hand and delegate where necessary. Governance and feedback systems were put in place to ensure results and to manage deviations during the process.”* These activities are evidence that the Lower-Right Quadrant was part of the learning experience as well.

Furthermore, there was ample evidence that co-researchers were working at various levels of consciousness as well as on a cognitive, affective, emotional and spiritual level. It is therefore hypothesized that Experiential Learning as an exemplar of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model can facilitate growth and development at various levels of consciousness and in all Four Quadrants. And in so doing, it helped to facilitate the processes in individuals to become self-organised learners. The essential characteristics of a Self – Organised Learner are,

- When an individual accepts responsibility for managing their own learning and is no longer dependent on other people’s directives and initiatives. The individual gives personal meaning to the events. There was evidence from the research that co-researchers started to take responsibility for their own learning, *“This until I realized the following: The learning experience is primarily my responsibility. We*

*work in an environment where it is assumed that we are mature.” And, “This was one of the most important things that I have learned about the coaching and that was that I must each person take responsibility for their own actions/careers/tasks/environments.” And, “Then all of a sudden I realized that I was in charge of my 2 hour sessions every second week. I was responsible for the agenda of our coaching sessions and not my Coach.”*

- The individual becomes aware of how they learn, in other words, they start to reflect on the functional components of the learning processes. That is, they can recognize their need and translate it into a clearly defined purpose. They develop their own strategies to achieve the purpose and are able to recognize the quality of the outcome they have achieved. More importantly they can critically review the cycle and implement more effective learning cycles. Through the use of Personal Learning Contracts and project plans co-researchers in this project reflected more on the functional aspects of their personal learning processes, *“Every performance agreement that I did, I did with the personal contract in the back of my mind, to ask the questions, what can YOU do to perform better and to earn a piece of the cake. To see the bigger picture and to learn from it... Not only do you put your own thoughts on paper, you get to see at the end of the contract how and what you learned from it.”* And, *“These activities were managed by preparing a "Personal Learning Contract" for each of the activities. In this learning contract I focused on the following areas: "Purpose - what is my purpose?" Outcome - how shall I judge and measure my success and how well did I do? "Strategy - what actions shall I take and what did I actually do? I did however find this process very time consuming and have stopped doing it. Subconsciously I however still do it in my mind and I have implemented a process of drawing up project plans for all activities to be performed, going into more detail in those activities which I regard as important.”*



- The individual learns to appreciate the dynamic nature of the personal learning process while at the same time striving for more self-organised learning. There was the realization that coaching and learning is a dynamic journey of self discovery, *“I have by no means arrived. I have a few truths and lots of unanswered questions.”*
- To learn how to learn by continually challenging their existing partially developed skills. The aim being to transform these skills in order to achieve higher standards of personal competence. The research showed that there was an increased ability to recognize and trust individual feelings, intuition and experience and use it to their advantage, *“I learnt that I should trust my feelings around situations and use it to lower stress by putting actions in place sooner than later to counter the situation dictated by my intuition. These feelings (instinct and intuition) has been developed over years through experience, learning from good and bad situations, knowledge of people and their way of doing things, exploring and study. I must use it to my advantage. I learnt that this feeling is very easily recognisable and is indicated by a risen level of stress. I have to learn to trust this intuition and act on it sooner than later.”* And, *“The intuitive abilities of perceiving information and feeling based judgements necessary in the face-to-face selling environment and my intuitive lack of it - could explain my nightmarish experience at the sales school in 1999. We discussed the sales school experience. This experience was a shock to me as I have done everything on theoretical and effort level to pass it - but did not. The thing I now understand is that on a Sensing level - reading the situation and reacting to it - was what was missing.”*
- For the individual to recognise the value of S-O-L and to practise it as a way of life regardless of the social context. Co-researchers realised that life is an integrated whole and that learning applies to all areas of life, *“We have all the answers - we must decide what the best is. Because work, health, spiritual and private life will always have an effect on each other balance in life is of essence. We must use what is available in our daily environment to be more successful.”*
- The individual redefines S-O-L in their own terms in such away that the S-O-L expertise generates new dimensions of personal innovation and experimentation. An example of this from the research is the following; *“I have learned that there are times that the organisation is more receptive to consider new ideas i.e. when the organisation is under pressure w.r.t. margins it will be very receptive to*

*consider forward pricing principles to win business than during other times when it is not under pressure. From this realisation I have learnt that the timing to promote ideas to the organisation should be analysed meticulously to determine the right time to put in the effort to do so. The right forums, places and people to approach should also be considered.”*

- Individuals constantly strive for quantum improvements in their own ability to learn. The person becomes better at learning on the job, from training courses, from experienced colleagues and from their own and other people’s mistakes. As co-researchers became more aware of how they learn, they started to expand the learning into other areas of their lives. *“I started by selecting certain goals to achieve. Then document the process of how I am going to achieve the specific goals. By always keeping in mind what my individual makeup is, I try to use that in reaching the goals. I then evaluate and document the targets set out to do. Then I reflect on the outcome and discuss it with the coach. I started with practical operational issues that hinders me in ultimate performance and then moved towards more less tangible issues. I tried to apply some of this process and lessons learned with the other team members.”*

## **5.6 Research hypothesis**

Based on the research findings it is hypothesised that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model facilitated both the prehension and transformational dimensions of Experiential Learning in individuals. The co-researchers understood and owned some significant behavioural dynamics inside of themselves, as well as between themselves and other significant colleagues. This underlines the possibilities of coaching as a staff development intervention to facilitate self-authorisation by working through one’s own unconscious and dynamic behavioural issues. It is hypothesised that coaching presented from this model empowers individual employees to work towards their own cognitive insight, the experience of emotional meaningfulness and taking of responsibility for their own growth and career development.

## **5.7 Summary**

This chapter presented the composite textural description in terms of the common themes that arose for the group as a whole. The themes being, the relationship started off as one of dependency and the transference of power, for coaching to be effective a trusting relationship is vital, that reflection is important for learning and personal growth, through coaching individuals became more self aware, heightened self awareness led to an awareness of self in relation to others, heightened self awareness led to transpersonal awareness, coaching facilitated a learning journey, coaching facilitated more self autonomy, co-researchers moved into more complex strategic thinking and acting and coaching was worthwhile and a good investment for the company. It then moved on to imaginative variation to develop a composite structural description of the group as a whole. Here the aim was to try and understand how the co-researchers as a group experienced what they experienced. By integrating the composite textural description and the composite textural description a synthesis of the meaning and essences of the experiences of the group as a whole was defined. The integrity of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model was briefly discussed. Finally it presented the research hypothesis that was generated.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Reflection, Conclusions, limitations and Recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter will start with a general reflection to explore how the findings of the research ties back to similar or other studies. It will then explore the conclusions in terms of the implications of this research for the company, the profession of coaching and finally for the author. Limitations of the research project will be explored as well. This chapter will conclude with recommendations for future research directions or projects and some final reflections on the learning process.

#### **6.2 Reflection**

Given that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is a new synthesis, it is very difficult to compare the results to other studies. The model was developed and researched for the first time at T-Systems South Africa. Secondly, no research studies could be found that involved phenomenological investigations into the experience of being coached or being coached within the business context. This research project therefore seems to be the first of its kind. As a result, I was forced to explore various literature sources for aspects of the study that could be the same as other findings in various disciplines.

Based on the research findings, and the feedback that Human Resources (HR) had received from coachees and their supervisors, the HR manager responsible for organization Development and Training at T- Systems South Africa, started to ask a number of pertinent questions. Why were people so enthusiastic about the coaching intervention? As a coachee herself and based on feedback she received, she started to ask why individuals were learning faster through coaching than traditional training methods and interventions. For years HR had tried to get employees to take

responsibility and accountability for their own training and development, without any success. Yet with coaching they started to experience a growing demand for the service. People actually started to ask HR whether they could continue with coaching once the research project had stopped. On further investigation I discovered what Dotlich and Cairo (1999) refer to as the Mass Customization of Learning. They point out that we are seeing the de-emphasis of the one-size-fits-all type of training. In their view this is a trend that will continue to grow as organizations start to realise and value the individuality of their leaders, customers and managers. They point out that training programmes are failing to help individuals deal with change initiatives, because change impacts people differently. The point is that these programmes and training initiatives need to account for how each individual deals with change, or they will not work. Their Action Coaching model is an attempt to mass customize training. Although the process and model does not change from person to person, it does take the individual's needs and development issues into consideration.

This is a significant insight that was critical in the development of Almaas's (1998) enquiry methodology as well. His insight was, however, not limited to organizational training and development. He looked at teachers whose teachings are timeless and universal, like Buddha, Christ and Mohammed. He then asked himself why it is that despite the millions of people who adhere to their teachings, very few actually reach the levels of enlightenment that the founding teachers did. Traditionally the blame for this lack of enlightenment has been laid at the feet of the student. Either the student was seen as being too lazy or too undisciplined. Almaas disagrees, in that he sees the problem being due to teachers following a generalized teaching approach, *"We are seeing more and more that teaching cannot be done in a general way. Universal teaching, regardless of how deep and true, must be tailored to the specific needs of the particular individual. Otherwise, the teaching will be ineffective, and it is no fault of the student"* (1998: 15). By this Almaas means that the teacher must take the unique situation of the student as well as his or her level of consciousness into account, *"If the teaching is to be broadly and comprehensively effective, it must be presented in a way that is digestible to the average person, and digestible to the student. This is a matter of communication, of appropriateness, of tact, of skill, of understanding. The individual's mind and state of consciousness need to be taken into consideration for the communication to be appropriate and effective....An effective teacher will handle a*

*situation in a very personal way for the student, taking into consideration the unique situation of the student and his state of consciousness”(1998:13).*

Hence Almaas’s (1998) warning that any teaching built around a particular model or a particular state of consciousness is bound to be limited. It will only be effective for people who happen to be at that level of consciousness. No model or particular state of consciousness can be universally applied to all people. Hence Smuts’ (1973) call for a new science called Personology. In his view, psychology works with generalizations and ignores the uniqueness of the individual personality. The same could be said of theology. Let this be a warning for the profession of coaching. For it seems to be a pattern that as soon as a discipline or profession matures it tends to start generalising by trying to apply certain models.

With hindsight there is the realization that the power of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is that it “mass customized learning” for individuals. Being a multi quadrant, multiple level of consciousness model, it allowed for individuals to apply just-in-time learning. Co-researchers set their own learning agendas and used experiential learning through learning conversations to learn what they had to learn at a particular point. The coach did not come in with a predetermined learning / training plan or objective. People learnt what they wanted to learn, based on where they were at that particular point. This meant that the learning was very relevant and meaningful for them and as a result they took responsibility and accountability for their own learning and development.

### **6.2.1 The Quaker Persuasion Model**

In this regard the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model has strong similarities to the “Friendly Disentangling” method or persuasion model. Spears (1998) refers to the persuasion model used by the Quakers Robert Greenleaf and John Moolman. The methodology was first developed by the Philadelphia cloth merchant John Moolman to address the issue of slavery amongst the Quakers in the eighteenth century. He used the method with individuals and small groups and in a time period of 30 years he almost single-handedly rid the Quakers of slavery. Due to his tireless efforts, by 1770 no Quakers owned slaves. As a result the Quakers were the first religious group in the

United States to formally denounce and forbid slavery amongst their members. The method that he developed consisted of four principles,

- **There is good in everyone.** The basic assumption is that there is some good in all of us. This good in everyone serves as the foundation for action and learning. For him it would appear that it was better to start from what we have in common; that is the good, rather than starting with what is not so good and from how we differ. The important thing was to try and find common ground from which to build a constructive relationship. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model this happened through the Coach and Coachee exploring each other's personal stories.
- **Traditional customs and structures as causes of the problem.** This is the belief that individuals are in very important ways social constructions of the traditional systems and structures within which they are born and socialised. That is, individual behaviours and values are greatly influenced by the traditional system within which they are born and socialised. In this regard it has some commonality with the post-modern perspective as well as the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, which recognises that any abstract concept will be influenced by the individual's concrete experience and the cultural context in which they have developed. Secondly, the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model recognises that a system can and is able to produce certain predictable behaviours despite the individuals involved. So for example, Moolman found that the Quakers' children accepted slavery in part out of love for their parents and community, who in turn had become entangled in slavery and implicitly and explicitly accepted the teaching that slavery was acceptable. A very similar situation to what must have happened in Germany with anti-semitism and apartheid in South Africa.
- **Friendly and cheerful.** For both ethical and effectiveness reasons act in a friendly and cheerful manner with those you are in actual and potential conflict with. For ethical reasons it is important to be friendly because it is important to respect and care not just for those with whom you agree, but also with those who have a totally different view, values and ethical standards. Given that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model caters for all Four Fields of Knowledge and various levels of consciousness, it makes it easier to accommodate coachees who do have different views, values and standards because the coach is not fixated on any particular

model, technique, methodology, discipline or school of thought. The coach knows that every one of these is a partial truth and not the whole truth.

- **Continuous, experimental action-learning.** John Fox who was one of the founders of Quakerism started his journal with the phrase, “This I knew experientially.” For Fox, Moolman and Greenleaf the emphasis was on experimental learning, toward action preceding learning, toward learning through experimental action. Critical to their method was the idea that experimentation needs to be continuous. On closer inspection, however, one can soon see that they were using a form of experiential learning.

So how does the persuasion model work?

- Firstly, it is important to frame oneself in a “we” fellowship with others and look for the source of the current problematic behaviour within the biases of an embedded tradition system, rather than solely in the behaviours and governing values of the individual. This basically means that we must look at how the prevailing culture, structures and procedures contribute to the individual’s behaviour, all the time remembering that there really is some good in every individual. Basically it means accepting the person for who they are and that, for the most part, they are basically good people. At the same time recognise that some cultural or system level bias might be entangled with the individual behaviour, and we usually co-create those cultures. Once again, this is very similar to the approach adopted in the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model where the question always asked is whether the problematic behaviour is an individual characteristic, or due to the systems structures, processes or procedures.
- Approach those involved in a friendly manner. Your approach to the people involved should be friendly and respectful, not adversarial or critical. That is why in the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model it is important to explore each others’ stories in an open inquisitive way. It is about openly exploring another persons experience all the time remembering that any view is not “the truth” but a partial truth.
- Ask for help in disentangling a problematic behaviour from potential biases within “our” embedded tradition system. Remember that you share the situation with the



individual. It is not an I versus you situation. Coming from a lofty position does not help, people just close up. Rather ask for help in trying to understand where they are coming from, and which cultural biases are at play. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model helped facilitate a similar process, *“The ability to go through my life history with the mentor was a good exercise for me as it helped me realise where I had come from and where I was”*.

- Work with alternative behaviours and/or governing values that do not rest on the troublesome biases of the tradition system. This involves asking the other person to experiment with different behaviours or actions. This is where active experimentation comes into action. You don’t ask them to do everything in a new way. All you do is ask them to experiment with a new possibility. Moolman for example, found it intolerable that Quakers, who have a fundamental belief that God is in every individual could support an unjust system like slavery. That was their concrete experience. He then asked them to help him disentangle a problematic behaviour (supporting slavery) from potential biases within their embedded tradition system. What he was asking them to do was to participate in reflective observation. What they discovered through the reflective observation was that most Quakers believed that the Negroes were very lazy and that they could not work as hard as the free white labourers. He then got them to reflect on this experience and assumption even further. What they hypothesised was that the Negroes were actually lazy because they had nothing to work for. No matter how hard they worked they would always be slaves, they could never improve their lot in life. Free whites, however, could become wealthier through working harder. So they hypothesised that slaves would work harder if they owned their own property. This hypothesis was their abstract conceptualisation. To test this hypothesis, Moolman asked them to perform an active experiment, which they did. He asked the Quaker farmers to free their slaves and grant them sharecropping opportunities. As a result of this experiment, the Quakers became the most profitable farmers. The remarkable thing was that Moolman did this one farmer at a time. Within 20 years, many farmers had adopted this ethical and political-economic reform and by 1800 slavery was eliminated in Pennsylvania. Greenleaf used exactly the same principles and approach to create and bring about equal employment opportunities for woman at AT&T. Prior to employing this approach, women could not do technical work because they were not strong enough to carry 50-pound rolls of

telephone wire. By going through this approach, they experimented with 25-pound rolls of wire. They found that women could comfortably carry 25-pound rolls of wire. As a result, more women were hired to work in the technical field. Greenleaf did the same with black management development at AT&T. By using the same approach between 1955 and 1964, before the 1968 Civil Rights Act in the United States, AT&T managed to increase their black managers from about 0.5% to about 4.5% of total employed managers. (It might be a model worth investigating and applying in South African, given the Affirmative Action targets). The beauty of the model is that, like the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, it can empower the individual to work towards their own cognitive insight, the experience of emotional meaningfulness and taking of responsibility for their own growth through experimenting with alternative cognitions and behaviours. In both cases, the knowledge is not forced on to the individual. Both models actively engage the individual to explore their own assumptions, to try and understand their behaviour, and then ask the individual to come up with a hypothesis of why that is the case, and then to explore and experiment with alternative assumptions and behaviours. In so doing, new cognitive and behavioural patterns are established over time.

### **6.2.2 The Corporate Leadership Council**

In 2003 the Corporate Leadership Council published a report “Maximizing Returns on Professional Executive Coaching.” The report stemmed from research that the Corporate Leadership Council had undertaken at the request of its members into the effectiveness of Executive Coaching as a development intervention. The key findings of the research were as follows:

- **A growing trend.** Around the world organisations were getting excited about the positive impact of coaching as a leadership development intervention. From Table 6.1 it can be seen that executive coaching is amongst the top five development interventions and ranks well ahead of any other formal developmental programme. In addition, other forms of formal training are not as valued as coaching. The highest ranking formal training course is people-management at number eight, followed by technical skills courses at number sixteen. Yet despite the strong

preference for coaching, the Council found that organisations are ineffective at providing executives with coaching as an intervention.

Development Programmeme	Overall Rank
Amount of decision-making authority	1
Creating leadership development plan	2
Interacting with peers	3
Meeting with an executive coach	4
Meeting with a mentor	5
Feedback	6
Turning around a struggling business	7
People-management skills course	8
Working in a new functional area	9
Working in a foreign country	10
Working in a new line of business	11
Launching a new business	12
Number of direct reports	13
Quality of direct reports	14
Off-site seminars in business skills	15
Technical skills courses	16
Business skills courses	17

Table 6.1 Executives' Preferred Option for Developmental Intervention

Source: Adapted form Corporate Leadership Council (2003: 6)

- **A costly intervention.** Although executives have a strong preference for executive coaching they were concerned about the cost of coaching interventions as opposed to other leadership development activities. They believe that external professional coaching is possibly the most expensive option in leadership development interventions, and as a result HR departments are under increasing pressure to justify the expenditure. The demand for return on investment can be expected to grow.

- **Inconsistent implementation.** Despite the excitement around coaching interventions, organisations are not managing coaching investments in a coordinated or consistent manner.
- **Inconsistent returns.** Returns on coaching engagements varied across member organisations. The Council found that poorly implemented coaching interventions were unreliable as a driver of improvements in employee or business performance. That is, coaching engagements may not always achieve the expected positive outcome. The Council found that the presence of coaching does not guarantee performance improvement and shows variable returns on coaching at individual level as can be seen in Figure 6.1.

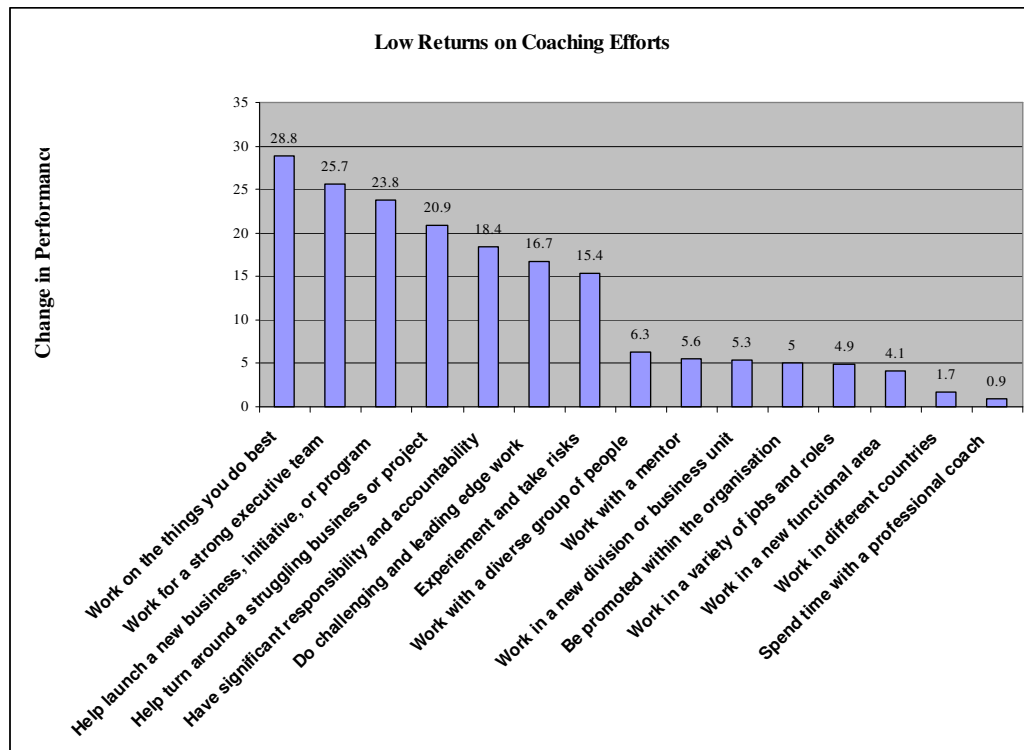


Figure 6.1. Low Returns on Coaching Effort.

Source: Adapted from Corporate Leadership Council (2003: 8)

- **Council response.** As a result of these findings the Council identified five challenges that impede the development of positive coaching engagements and the linkage of these engagements to business results. The five challenges are;
  - **Difficulty finding “best fit” professional coaches.** The big challenge is to identify suitable coaches due to the abundance of coaches and the absence of coordinated coach recruitment practices. This is mainly due to the fact that the coaching market is unregulated, with coaches operating without clearly defined professional standards and accreditation. Added to that, is the fact that many organisations recruit coaches on a case-by-case basis, which leads to the duplication of selection efforts and preventing the consistent and rigorous scrutiny of the coaches’ credentials.
  - **Unfocused coaching engagements.** Organisations do not prioritize coaching engagements properly. Often coaching is offered, based on the merits of the individual’s request rather than on the business needs and requirements. The Council found that coaching is provided as a development tool for executives, without considering whether the coaching engagement is aligned with business needs.
  - **Poor matching of coaching resources to executive requirements.** Effective coaching depends on a positive relationship between the executive and the coach. In fact, Council members indicated that a trusting relationship is a critical variable governing the success or failure of the coaching engagement. The Council found that few organisations are able to effectively match the coaches’ experience and personality with the executives’ needs and requirements.
  - **Disconnect from the organisation.** Coaching engagements happen “behind closed doors” which often means that coaching goals do not correspond with business or organisational requirements. Due to the high degree of confidentiality between the coach and coachee, coaching engagements run the risk of diverging from business needs. As a result, coaching fails to generate an ongoing impact on the business. For that reason many organisations felt that although confidentiality needed to be protected, the absence of managerial reinforcement for the objectives pursued in coaching can limit the effectiveness of the engagements. This finding opens up an interesting paradox. Schön (1983) points out that the more an organisation depends for its survival on

innovation and adaptation to a changing environment, the more it is dependent on learning. On the other hand all organisations need stability and predictability. According to Schön (1983) all organisations are cooperative systems, in that individuals depend on the predictability of each other's responses. Managers need to rely on the predictable behaviours of their subordinates. Hence the need for well established processes, procedures, roles and responsibilities and stable outcomes. The problem is that surprise, which is essential to learning, is contrary to organisational predictability and stability. As a result, any noteworthy learning which involves a significant change in the knowledge structure and underlying values, which is essential to organisational adaptation, disrupts the constancies on which organisational life depends. This creates a dilemma for the organisation and the individual. *"Reflection-in-action is both a consequence and cause of surprise. When a member of a bureaucracy embarks on a course of reflective practice, allowing himself to experience confusion and uncertainty, subjecting his frames and theories to conscious criticism and change, he may increase his capacity to contribute to significant organizational learning, but he also becomes, by the same token, a danger to the stable system of rules and procedures within which he is expected to deliver his technical expertise. Thus ordinary bureaucracies tend to resist a professional's attempt to move from technical expertise to reflective practice"* (Schön, 1983: 328-329). Cranton (1996) makes a similar point with regard to transformative learning. Referring to the work of Mezirow, she argues that the dogmatic insistence to learning outcomes that have been specified in advance can hinder transformative learning, *"...dogmatic insistence that learning outcomes be specified in advance of the educational experience in terms of observable changes in behaviour or 'competencies' that are used as benchmarks against which to measure learning gains will result in a reductive distortion that serve merely as a device of indoctrination"* (Cranton, 1996: 44).

- **Inconsistent delivery and quality of coaching.** Due to a wide diversity of coaching styles and approaches, organisations find it difficult to effectively implement and manage a performance standard for coaches across the organisation. Hence coaching engagements can create variable outcomes across the organisation.

How does the integrated Experiential Coaching Model and the research findings relate to the five identified challenges identified by the Corporate Leadership Council?

- **Difficulty finding “best fit” professional coaches.** The coaching market in South Africa is still unregulated, with coaches operating without clearly defined professional standards and accreditation. The challenge to identify suitable coaches will be around for some time to come. The problem is compounded by the fact that currently, executive coaches are entering the market from backgrounds that vary from psychology, theology, business consulting, management training and even personal fitness trainers, to name but a few. Even worse is the fact that there are people operating in the market, that have had no professional training. The contribution that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model brings to the profession is that for the first time an integrated executive coaching model has been developed that can be made explicit. It is integrated in that it provides a theoretical framework for human development (Wilber’s Model), a method that can be used (Experiential Learning) to facilitate the development of executive competencies (Jaques Leadership Competency Model) within a business context (the Balanced Scorecard). Potential buyers can be taken through the model and understand how the coaching process works and what they are buying. This enables any company to consistently and rigorously scrutinise the coach’s credentials, model and way of working.
- **Unfocused coaching engagements.** The Council found that coaching is provided as a development tool for executives, without considering whether the coaching engagement is aligned with business needs. An integral part of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is that the coaching experience is placed firmly within the context of the business strategy and the operationalisation of that strategy. That is why the Balanced Scorecard and especially the last two perspectives, the internal and learning, and growth perspectives are central to the coaching model. In so doing even though other aspects on the individual’s lives are explored, the coaching stays aligned with the business need and context. Co-researchers had this to say, *“To improve my strategic thinking and implementation competencies. A very difficult topic, for me, but a very exiting one. The outcome for this task was that a strategic plan was in place for CS and that it must reflect*

*our themes and BSC.” And, “Balanced Scorecard. We decided to tackle this project because it would add value to myself in terms of what needs to be achieved within my department to compliment the companies balanced scorecard. The first problem was to get a correct and up-to-date scorecard within the company. Nobody seems to have one and at the end I decided to take what I could get and work with it. In the beginning it seems like a huge task because every point on the BSC needed to be addressed and every point cascades into more actions within every department. We broke it down into manageable parts/actions en decided how I must address every point. We discussed every point carefully and decided on an action plan. Because of the amount of information this task spanned over a few sessions. This method definitely helped me not to jump in head over heels and start with the task. I carefully plan the task at hand and delegate where necessary. Governance and feedback systems were put in place to ensure results and to manage deviations during the process.” And, “I learnt that my new position it is required of me to provide the answers, put forward structures and processes and implement it.” Furthermore, part of the process that is followed in the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, is the active participation of the coachees immediate boss and human resources in the coaching processes. They provide input into which areas they would like to see the individual develop in, and they were provided with feedback on an ongoing basis. Although it was discovered that this feedback loop needs to be more formalized in future.*

- **Poor matching of coaching resources to executive requirements.** Effective coaching depends on a positive relationship between the executive and the coach. In fact Council members indicated that a trusting relationship is a critical variable governing the success or failure of the coaching engagement. This was one of the key findings of this research project, *“It is all about the relationship and as with many people this is based on trust”*. Without trust and respect, learning could not take place, *“I have since realised that the crux of successful coaching lies in the relationship. No learning will take place if trust and respect are not established first.”* The building of a coaching relationship was not a quick fix and it took time to build, *“Coaching a valuable tool that needs to be unlocked over time, I do not believe that it is a quick fix. It is all about the relationship and as with many people this is based on trust and trust takes time”*. And, *“I think that the most important thing that comes to mind is trust, that for me was the first barrier that needed to be*



*crossed. It was something that wasted two sessions for me, and after tackling it head on...*” What this research project showed was that a trusting relationship was vital to the coaching engagement. The question has to be asked whether it is realistic to expect that organisations will be able to effectively match the coach’s experience and personality with the executives’ needs and requirements up front. It is my opinion that the matching processes is more an art than a science, and even with the best intentions, time is needed for the trusting relationship to be established. For example, *“While the relationship was being established, we kept ourselves busy dealing with cognitive learning moments. I had a few theories to explore and needed some guidance on time management and strategic alignment issues. Although that might now seem insignificant it played the role of building trust and respect.”* And, *“I, being structured, found the first couple of session frustrating, as I wanted to move much faster. Once again, the following dawned on me - we cannot proceed without a level of trust.”*

- **Disconnect from the organisation.** Coaching engagements happen “behind closed doors” which often means that coaching goals do not correspond with business or organisational requirements. As was mentioned above, one of the strengths of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is that the coaching experience is firmly grounded in the business context and strategy. The confidentiality issue in this model and research is more complex than in the case with therapy, where confidentiality is clear and absolute. Feedback is given back into the organisation on a regular basis, to gauge whether the process is still on track or not. Feedback would, however, be in terms of trends and not specifics. In the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, management and human resources stay actively involved in the process. Hence co-researchers could write the following, *“Probably one of the best satisfactions and proof that I have learnt and grown since the start of the coaching session was the feedback that I got from my manager during the performance management feedback session. The feedback was very positive and she also indicated the areas of improvement that I still need to and want to work on.”* The Integrated Coaching Model therefore allows for confidentiality to be protected, and for managerial reinforcement of the objectives being pursued. However, being an integral model that works with four quadrants and multiple levels of consciousness it still allows for the element of surprise, which is essential to learning and contrary to organisational predictability and

stability. Because it is self-organised learning, where the individual takes accountability and responsibility for their own learning, the danger of indoctrination is avoided. *“The context of the learning that I speak about in this essay is very important. There is no doubt that the coaching experience has contributed significantly to my learning (more like development) in this period... Coaching has been a place that has provided learning in its own right; it has also been a place where experience, opinion, problem and question find competent debate, reflection and perspective.... The learning I have experienced in this time through coaching can not be accounted for in terms of some "desirable business or efficiency based outcome" or some improved test score - it has been a deeply personal journey which has resulted in a more whole being and as a natural result a more focused and efficient employee. This seems counter culture, but it's true.”* And, *“The aims that I set out for myself for coaching did not materialise. I did not get the content I was aiming for; instead I got the me I was looking for. I can't say I would not have survived the year without coaching, or would have been divorced by now, without coaching. What I can say is that where there should have been a scar there is now thankfulness and peace.”*

- **Inconsistent delivery and quality of coaching.** Based on this research project, I am of the opinion that the striving for consistent delivery and quality of coaching is an unrealistic illusion that should be dropped. It is an idealistic, romantic illusion based on the belief that coaching can be generalized and mass produced. What is needed is a paradigm shift from mass generalized learning to mass customized learning. This research project involved thirteen individuals in the same company, coached by the same coach with exactly the same methodology. Although the research could identify general trends, every individual experienced the coaching experience differently. Within the identified general trends the learning experience was different for every single one of the thirteen co-researchers. Even though general trends could be identified, this research project has shown that even within the same company, with the same coach and methodology there were variable outcomes. Coaching as a profession should heed the plea of Smuts (1973) and not fall into the same trap that psychology has, in that as a science, psychology deals with the average or generalized individual and in so doing it ignores the individual uniqueness of the personality. Coaching which has as its very foundation a trusting relationship, is and will be a function of the individual uniqueness of the

personality of the coach and the individual uniqueness of the personality of the coachee. What this study has shown is that despite the same coach and methodology within the same organization, coaching intervention outcomes do vary from individual to individual. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model does allow for the mass customization of learning in that the individual is free to explore learning in any of the four quadrants of knowledge and at any level of consciousness. Furthermore, because it is such an integrated model, learning in any area or level can spill over into other areas or levels of the individual's life.

### 6.2.3 Mintzberg's eight propositions

Although Mintzberg's (2004) study is not directly related to coaching as such, he does argue for a fresh approach to managerial development. Seeing that executive coaching is a relatively new approach to managerial development I felt that it is worth comparing my research findings with what Mintzberg (2004) propagates in his eight propositions. Mintzberg (2004) challenges the conventional notion that the MBA degree develops managers. In response to his critique of the MBA programmes Mintzberg (2004) suggests a different approach to developing managers based on eight propositions. Although he expands the propositions in the context of university training, the author believes that they are applicable to coaching as well. In what follows I will explore those eight propositions and see whether the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and this research project can be related to the propositions or not.

- **Proposition 1. Management education should be restricted to practicing managers.** Mintzberg believes that this development, *"...begins in a very different place: that it is not "individuals" who should be developed, but members of a social system in which leadership is embedded; that only those who already have managerial responsibility can be educated and developed as managers..."* (2004:242). This is a very important point of departure as it raises the all important question as to who is the best judge of leadership potential. Mintzberg (2004) is of the opinion that the participating person cannot be the best judge of leadership potential, nor can some disconnected selection committee in a university. Neither can the coach, for that matter. The selection can only be done by those who have

witnessed the individual's potential in action, those people who have worked with the nominated individuals. Management education should be a right, earned by performance as a manager. MBA programmes, on the other hand, rely on self selection; the candidates apply and the schools select. Mintzberg (2004) believes that management development programmes are more effective when the organization selects its candidates, supports them and pays for them. In the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model practising managers are selected for coaching by their managers and human resources. Coaching is aimed at the development of the individual within the context of the business, in that it facilitates integrated experiential learning in individuals in order to facilitate personal growth and development with the aim of improving individual and organizational performance. The co-researchers in this project were all in various levels of management, ranging from team leaders (first level of management) to business managers (people reporting directly to the executive). They all brought some level of managerial experience into the coaching project. They were all selected by the organization (the social system) to partake in the project, they did not select themselves.

- **Proposition 2. The classroom should leverage the managers' experience in their education.** It is very important to take the experience of the managers into account and as such the classroom learning experience must be linked to the person's job. Mintzberg (2004) advocates that managers should stay on the job and attend two-week modules every few months to allow for deep learning without undue disruption to the practice. His feeling is that too much time away from work can be very stressful, while too little time can interfere with serious learning. The beauty of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is that it does not disrupt the practice at all. The coach and client meet every two weeks for two hours to explore and reflect on the client's experience together. Between sessions, the client actively experiments with the new insights and learning. It is on the job experiential learning. Furthermore, Mintzberg (2004) is of the opinion that the most powerful reflection comes from reflecting on experiences that have been lived naturally. Created experiences like action learning and project work should at all times be supplementary to the learning experience and not central to it. Because the individual's natural experience is central to the learning experience, it is important that management education should be customized for each individual.

Here Mintzberg (2004), Dotlich and Cairo (1999) are calling for the same thing, namely; the mass customization of learning or management education. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model empowered co-researchers to set their own learning agendas and use Experiential Learning through Learning Conversations to learn what they had to learn at that particular point. The coach did not come in with a predetermined learning / training plan or objective. People learnt what they wanted to learn, based on where they were at that particular point. Here are a few examples, *“During this process I learned that I am in control of the coaching session. In other words, I decide the tempo, what to discuss and how to implement. The coach was only there to prompt me for ideas and to steer me in the correct direction. The success/outcome of this coaching was determined by me!”* And, *“That I am in control of my progress and that I need to make time to implement the outcome of the coaching session.”* And, *“This until I realized the following: The learning experience is primarily my responsibility. We work in an environment where it is assumed that we are mature.”* And, *“After my first session that I had, I discovered that not only is it a very informal way of learning but I could talk about any subject that I want.”* Mintzberg’s (2004) call is for less teaching and more learning in management education and the author would add management development. Hence the need for more *learner-centered* management education as opposed to *provider-centered* management education. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is more learner-centered, in that the client and the organization set the learning agenda, not the coach. Although at times the coach can do some teaching.

- **Proposition 3. Insightful theories help managers make sense of their experience.** Mention the word “theory” to managers and many will balk at the idea because it is generally seen as a dirty word. In the world of management it is practice and not theory that counts. The problem, however, as Mintzberg (2004) points out, is that reality is far too complex for anybody to carry around in their heads. It would be great if we could and if we could make decisions based on that knowledge. The truth, however, is that we all carry around theories, conceptual frameworks or mental models in our heads that help us to simplify reality and help us to make sense of it. Hence we better have good theories or mental models, as Jaques and Clement puts it, *“Concepts, theories and ideas are used continuously in everyday life. They determine what we see and what we learn from our experience.”*

*Unsound theories distort our experience, narrow our vision, and leave us none the wiser about the effects of our action on others...Action without sound theory is folly” (1997: 77). As Jaques and Clement (1997) has shown, it is impossible to develop wisdom without good, sound theories. For Mintzberg (2004) it is not a choice between practice or theory but rather about working with different theories that inform management practice. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model has been an attempt to develop a theoretical executive coaching model that can be applied in practice. In this project it is evident that a number of theories were explored and either found useful in the learning process, or not very relevant. Some theories that were introduced were Learning Conversations and Personal Learning Contracts, “That is were the personnel learning contract started. I did a couple of small contracts for my self and realized just how good it works. Not only do you put your own thoughts on paper, you get to see and the end of the contract how and what you learned from it. I started to use it on 2 of the people reporting to me and it worked like a charm.” The Balanced Score Card, “Balanced Scorecard. We decided to tackle this project because it would add value to myself in terms of what needs to be achieved within my department to compliment the companies balanced scorecard. The first problem was to get a correct and up-to-date scorecard within the company. Nobody seems to have one and at the end I decided to take what I could get and work with it. In the beginning it seems like a huge task because every point on the BSC needed to be addressed and every point cascades into more actions within every department. We broke it down into manageable parts/actions en decided how I must address every point. We discussed every point carefully and decided on an action plan.” Kolb’s (1984) preferred learning styles, “I found the Learning Styles Inventory exercise quite informative and my scores were well interpreted by the coach and it gave me the necessary insight to focus on my strengths and be aware of my weaknesses.” Systems theory, “I do perceive a risk here tho... there is still a system, the system needs to perpetuate itself for the wellbeing of its constituent parts, and the parts will do all to keep it alive because it allows them to live. This system governs even the most basic needs of the society that we choose to live in, and it requires of me to add to its continued survival.” Transpersonal theory, “I know who I am - I am. And the answer is now clear as if someone switched on a light in a place where light was only an idea. Eckhard Tolle put it so completely "it's the "I am" that comes before I am this, or I am that".*

*The peace that follows this realization (that is - to make real) is quite indescribable. The idea of the witness, the observing presence is the closest explanation - it's adequate. It means that I am the witness of my mind (my former personality, my former existence), it does not mean that the mind is now without reason or purpose, but it does mean that my poor brain does not have to solve the unsolvable problems that I had set before it in my previous conscious construct."*

Servant Leadership, *"Leadership doesn't mean power over a team. Leadership means connecting with, and serving people so that they can contribute what they can. This idea of servant leadership is about letting others be."*

An example of a theory that was explored and found not to be too helpful was the Enneagram, *"I used the Enneagram to identify my conflict handling style. Use Internet Enneagram test- Tested very superficially – I was classified as a Type 6 = loyalist = committed security oriented type – engaging, responsible, anxious and suspicious. Lloyd mentioned that in order to grow one should be more like the opposite types of your type - Opposites of Type 6 = Type 3 – Achiever (The Success-Oriented, Pragmatic Type: Adaptable, Excelling, Driven, and Image-Conscious) and Type 9 – Peacemaker (The Easygoing, Self-Effacing Type: Receptive, Reassuring Agreeable, and Complacent)? How these types handle conflict needs to be understood? I have not learnt much from this exercise. What I have learnt is that some people like to create conflict. This is sometimes necessary to get opposite points of view, extract issues and get to the bottom of a problem."*

- Proposition 4. Thoughtful reflection on experience in the light of conceptual ideas is key to managerial learning.** Here Mintzberg (2004) is in complete agreement with Schön (1983) that all managers need to develop the time and capacity for reflection-in-action, which is concurrent learning. As Kolb (1984) has pointed out, it is the reflective aspect and active experimentation (transformation dimension) that leads to the discovery of meaning. So reflection is about discovering meaning. In Mintzberg's (2004) view reflection is not casual. It is difficult and messy and involves, wondering, probing, analysing, connecting and synthesising. The importance of personal reflection was one of the learning themes that emerged from this study project. Some of the co-researchers had this to say, *"Reflection is one of the most important critical success factors in human learning experiences"*. And, *"We can need to reflect to learn/grow. This should be done continuously."* There was the realisation that reflection was the first step towards

changed behaviour, *“I have realized that the following interwoven steps took place in terms of my learning: Reflection led to perspective. Perspective led to awareness. Awareness led to insight. Insight led to re-evaluation. Re-evaluation led to confidence. Confidence led to changed behaviour.”* Although all reflection is ultimately personal, Mintzberg (2004) does believe that managers do benefit from reflecting collectively. The time away from the job, in the classroom, allows for what Beard et al. (2002) calls reflection-on-action (retrospective learning). Management education should encourage managers to reflect collectively on their own experience. For as Mintzberg (2004) argues, faculty members have to appreciate that managers can learn as much from each other as they can from the faculty. And for that matter faculty can learn a tremendous amount from practising managers. By its very nature, the Integrative Experiential Coaching Model accommodates reflection-on-action. But the reflection-on-action is limited to coach and the client. I tend to agree with Mintzberg that there is enormous value to be gained by getting the managers to reflect collectively. In fact, very early in the coaching project, it was realised that enormous benefits could be gained by getting all the managers who were being coached to reflect collectively. The client and I wanted to organise dedicated day sessions where we would explore what the group was learning collectively from the coaching experience. Not only that, given the functional nature of the organisation, it could facilitate the breaking down of the existing functional silos. The idea was, however, dropped when it was pointed out that such a process could in fact corrupt the research data. The aim of the project was to explore the subjective learning experience of each individual, not to explore the collective learning experience. Although in the end, the methodology does try to identify common themes from the subjective experiences. Put differently, the research was aimed at the Upper-Left Quadrant and not the Lower-Left Quadrant. Collective reflection is a function of the Lower-Left Quadrant. Be that as it may, this project did convince us that the Lower-Left Quadrant is worth exploring, and hence my agreement with Mintzberg that collective managerial reflection can contribute enormously to managerial education and learning.

- **Proposition 5. “Sharing” their competencies raises the managers’ consciousness about their practice.** This proposition ties in with proposition 4, especially in terms of collective managerial reflection. In fact, Mintzberg (2004) encourages managers and educators to think of this in the spirit of reflection, in that



it is about raising consciousness about competencies. *“Competency sharing is not about how a particular competency might be practiced, according to some general theory, or should be practiced, according to some article, but how it has been practiced by those managers in the room – what has worked and not worked for them. They simply get a chance to air and compare their practices”* (2004:261). It does not matter whether what comes out is good or bad, profound or silly. The aim is to expose and explore alternate ways of behaving, just as alternate mental models or theories expose different ways of thinking. By doing this, managers become more aware of their own practices, so that they can continue to learn from their own experiences. Once again, I am in complete agreement with Mintzberg and believe that it is a critical element in managerial education and learning. This is one of the weaknesses of the current Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, in that it focuses on one-on-one coaching within the business context that the individual operates in. Reflection of competencies is limited to the experience of the client and the coach. The client (T-Systems) and I are currently exploring ways in which we can introduce this element into their leadership development model. The current thinking is that it can be done by having dedicated days where the managers can dialogue issues and competencies collectively. As it currently stands, one-on-one coaching misses this vital element of collective learning, although it can help the individual work with and develop certain competencies. Even Mintzberg (2004) admits that coaching has a role to play in this domain, *“Teaching concepts is a relatively straightforward business. But developing competencies – training for skills –is not. It can be difficult and time consuming, requiring “learning the basic ideas, experimenting, being coached, receiving feedback” and carrying that learning on”* (2004:257). Teaching concepts is the domain of professors who are hired for their ability to think and do research. They are not known for their ability to teach skills. Teaching skills is the domain of coaches, mentors and of practising managers, who can learn from each other’s experience.

- **Proposition 6. Beyond reflection in the classroom comes learning from impact on the organization.** The idea of sending people on programmes so that they become better-developed managers is an incorrect one. Mintzberg (2004) feels strongly that there should not be a disconnect between the learning process and the learning context. In his view, the MBA is personal learning that has resulted in a

culture of self-serving managers. Instead, *“Management education has to get beyond me and I, at the very least to encourage managers to beyond themselves-in other words, to approach leadership”* (Mintzberg, 2004: 262). In his view every manager has to be a teacher; to coach and mentor their subordinates by sharing ideas and experiences. It is a privilege to receive formal education and development and as such the learner should be the teacher back on the job. Although the coaching experience was an intense personal journey for the co-researchers, raised self-awareness did help them move beyond themselves. As co-researchers became more aware of their intrapersonal issues they became more aware of how their own feelings, beliefs and behaviours impacted the teams they managed. *“My team, and our interaction and behaviour, had a lot to do with our history as a team, but the team members' individual and collective behavior had more to do with my personal attitudes and behavior than I ever thought. My personal issues had an immense influence on the way I handled my team.”* And, *“For example, my insecurities meant that I drove myself to succeed and perform, no matter what the circumstances. Handing over responsibility and power to my team was therefore difficult, because that would mean control is out of my hands. Coupled with most of the team member's fairly average competency levels (in terms of complex tasks), I continued to make sure I had a huge influence over them and their outputs, which perpetuated the fact that the team members were insecure of their potential.”* There was the realization that leadership involves more self-autonomy, which enables the leader to delegate personal responsibility to others. *“I am free, because I am less affected by what people say and think about me. I am responsible for my own happiness and freedom. Other's happiness is their responsibility. As a leader I can offer empathy, a characteristic I have in abundance. For the rest, people need to deal with their own demons. Leadership doesn't mean power over a team. Leadership means connecting with, and serving people so that they can contribute what they can. This idea of servant leadership is about letting others be. Only if I can be happy and free within myself, I can let others be.”* This research project showed that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model facilitated the movement beyond the me and I. In some cases there was even the movement into the transpersonal realms of awareness. But it did not stop there, there was ample evidence that the managers started to apply and teach their staff and teams what they had learnt. *“Another changed behaviour for me as a*

leader is reduced focus on task or output, and more focus on people. Although this is not an overnight occurrence, my approach is changing from telling them what to do and how to do it to a coaching approach where I support and help them (the team) to reflect and become aware of things.” And, “A major re-evaluation was that, in the case of my team, I needed to give them the opportunity to develop and learn, and succeed, and fail. Up to now, I had been keeping the team from fulfilling their potential. I needed to transfer responsibility and accountability to the team. That meant that ownership of problems that need to be sorted out, need to be with the people themselves. This need to be part of their growth and development, otherwise I take people's responsibilities away from them.” And, “I tried to apply some of this process and lessons learned with the other team members.” And, “The way in which some of the team leaders excelled with a bit of coaching was a direct result from the coaching I received.” Managers taught their subordinates how to use Personal Learning Contracts, “That is were the personnel learning contract started. I did a couple of small contracts for my self and realized just how good it works. Not only do you put your own thoughts on paper, you get to see and the end of the contract how and what you learned from it. I started to use it on 2 of the people reporting to me and it worked like a charm. The first task that I contracted was a task to a guy that are on the mentorship programme to be a future manager or team leader. As soon as I explained it the purpose of the contract to him, he realized the potential of it and said he will use it for his tasking in the future.”

- **Proposition 7. All of the above should be blended into a process of “experienced reflection.”** If you blend the previous propositions together, you get what Mintzberg (2004) refers to as experienced reflection, “...the managers bring their experience to the classroom, where the faculty introduce various concepts, theories, models...Reflection takes place these meet; experience considered in the light of conceptual ideas. The resultant learning is carried back to the job, where it impact behavior, providing further experience for reflection on the job and back to the classroom” (2004:264). Mintzberg’s (2004) experienced reflection is none other than Kolb’s (1984) Experiential Learning, which in turn is the injunction in the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. The manager’s experience is their concrete experience. Concepts, theories and models are abstract conceptualization. Reflecting on experience in light of conceptual ideas is

reflective observation and taking the learning back to the job to apply it, is active experimentation. The only difference is that Mintzberg (2004) is applying it to groups of managers in a process that combines learning modules away from the job and at different universities around the world. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, on the other hand, is applying the process to individuals within the work context. I believe that management education and learning will greatly benefit from both approaches. It is not a matter of the one being better than the other, but rather a synthesis of both. Both approaches have their positives and negatives. This research project has shown that managers have learnt and grown tremendously through the individual coaching approach. *“Looking back over the past few months I can confidently say that coaching has catalyzed and in most cases accelerated many aspects of learning that has originated in other areas and for this reason has been beyond value.”* Please note that the co-researcher does not credit coaching alone for the learning. Learning has originated in other areas as well. However, coaching has facilitated and accelerated the experiential learning process. The downside of coaching is to be found in pure economics. The one-on-one experiential learning experience is very expensive compared to group experiential learning. That is why, as will be shown later, we were forced to provide both options for further management education and learning at T-Systems.

- **Proposition 8. The curriculum, the architecture, and faculty should accordingly be shifted from controlled design to flexible facilitation.** For too long, management programmes have been chopped up into courses and classes, each with its own area of disassociated knowledge and skills. In other words, there is no integration or synthesis of these programmes. For this integration to happen, Mintzberg (2004) believes that there must be less control in management education and more collaboration. In that regard he sees the faculty as being the, *“...designers of an ongoing social process as much as the conveyers of conceptual knowledge”* (Mintzberg, 2004:271). Their task is to convey interesting material to the class but then to engage everybody with the material. This involves being a part of the learning process and introducing conceptual knowledge on a “just in time” basis. More importantly, it is about getting the managers involved in their own learning process. As a result of this research project, the Human Resource Department at T-Systems realized that they needed a more integrated approach to managerial leadership development. They wanted to move away from their

current position where they controlled the management development programme, to one where they just facilitated the process. Their aim was to move accountability and responsibility for management learning down to the managers themselves. The following section deals with the evolution away from controlled design to a more facilitated approach to managerial learning and development at T-Systems.

Based on the above discussion it is clear that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and the results that it produced in this research project correlates very well with Mintzberg's (2004) eight propositions for managerial education.

## **6.3 Conclusions**

### **6.3.1 Implications of the research project for T-Systems South Africa.**

The first insight for T-Systems was that the current training and development programme was based on a one-size-fits-all principle (generalized mass learning.) All managers at a specified level had to attend the same management courses or interventions whether they wanted to or not. Even worse was the fact, that over the years the company had undertaken a number of excellent management development interventions, but these interventions had never been integrated. As a result, HR formulated the following problem statements;

- Resistance to traditional training courses and interventions – As these are seen to be HR initiatives. There is no personal responsibility and accountability for individual development.
- Lack of integration between training initiatives and feedback on general progress of candidates.
- Managers do not understand their own learning needs.
- “In/out” mentality and response to learning interventions. Managers just attended the learning interventions and left, because that is what is expected of them.
- As a result of the previous point, managers do not apply training in the practical day to day environment.

- There is a resistance to face their own personal areas of development (soft issues).

Given the problems with the current approach to leadership development T-Systems South Africa (TSSA) specified the following objects for a new approach;

- To develop *managerial leadership* in TSSA. The decision was made that the company is not interested in general leadership development. They want to develop leaders in the business context, hence managerial leadership.
- This means leadership within the business context that is *delivery focused*.
- Ensuring that leaders develop all aspects of their persona - *internal as well as external* in order to develop as a whole being.
- Ensuring that leaders *integrate* their learning on all levels, to become successful managers for TSSA.
- Creating a leadership culture of “*being the master of your own destiny*”. Managers need to take personal responsibility and accountability for their own development.

As a direct result of this research project TSSA has totally changed its philosophy and approach to managerial leadership development. In fact, it calls for a total paradigm shift. The new paradigm is based on Mass Customization, with the following guiding principles;

- There will be generic competencies for leaders on all levels – not a “level based” model but a “humanity based” model. Jaques and Clement’s (1997) managerial leadership competencies, which are implied on level 3 of the generic T-Systems International key competencies, were selected as the generic competencies, namely;
  - (CP) The necessary level of *cognitive complexity* to carry the level of task complexity of the specific managerial role.
  - (V) A strong sense of *values* for the particular managerial work, and for the leadership of others.
  - (K/S) The appropriate *knowledge, and skills*, plus experienced practice in both.
  - (Wi) The necessary *wisdom* about people and things.
  - (-T) The *absence of abnormal temperamental or emotional characteristics that* disrupt the ability to work with others.

There will be no prescriptive competencies that should be obtained for certain levels.

A move away from one-size-fits-all type of training based on level and experience.

- Managerial Leadership will not be an “event” or “once off” but rather a process which spans two to three years.
- Leaders will be encouraged to look at and deal with all aspects of their persona for development.
- Integration between learning, self-insight and operations should be evident.
- The process can highlight incompetence, inability to function on a certain level or possible presence of pathology.
- It will bring about true healing from within and not just a quick solution to fix the visible outside “scars” in the short term.

During 2004 Sonja Botha, with input from myself, started to develop the new leadership development model for the company as represented in Figure 6.2. The underlying principles of the model are based on the findings of the research done on the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model with the pilot coaching group in 2003. The objective of the new model was to develop a managerial leadership development intervention that was totally integrated with the strategy of the company. The process has to start with aligning all functional teams in the organization with the Balanced Scorecard of the company. This in itself has been a major achievement. What was discovered during the research was that the Balanced Scorecard had not been cascaded throughout the organization. More importantly, it was discovered that the Balanced Scorecard had not been implemented properly. Hence the new managerial leadership programme starts with the internal perspective of the Balanced Scorecard at the level of the business processes that the individual is responsible for managing.

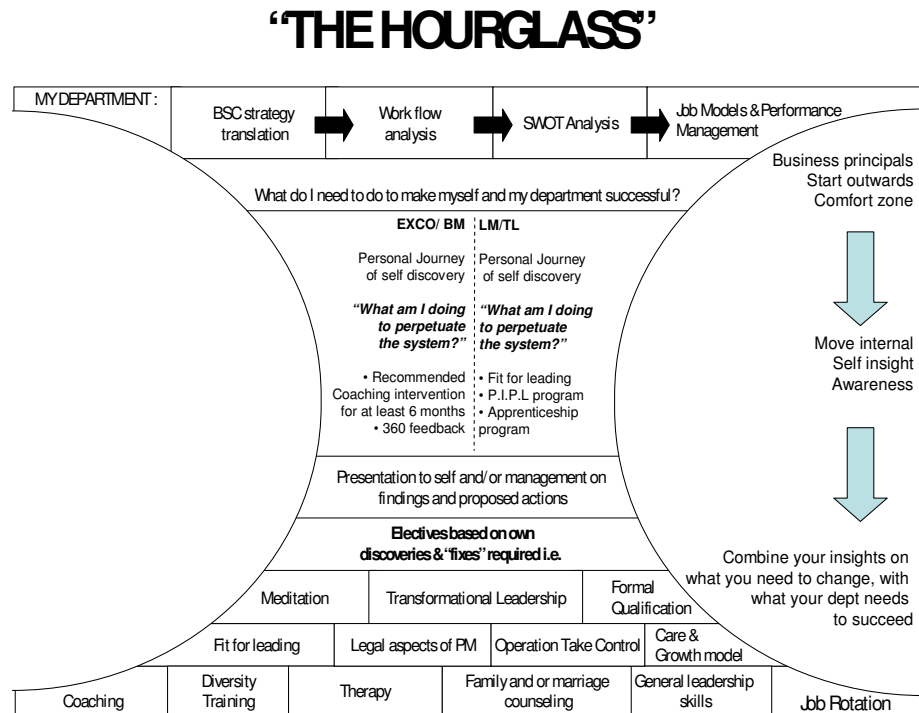


Figure 6.2. The New Managerial Leadership Model

Source: S Botha (2004)

Phase one of the model involves a two day workshop for every team and is based on an adaptation of Rhem's (1997) Participative Re-design process. The first task involves analyzing the social side of the system, where the team evaluates themselves against Rhem's (1997) six psychological criteria for productive workplaces. Rhem (1997) believes that there are six basic human needs that must be present for human beings to be productive. The six psychological criteria for productive work are;

- Elbow room for decision-making. People need to know what their parameters are. The need to feel that that they are their own bosses and that except in exceptional circumstances, they have room to make decisions that they can call their own. On the other hand they do not need so much elbow room that they do not know what to do.
- Opportunity to learn on the job and to keep on learning. Learning is a basic human need and is only possible when people are; able to set goals that are reasonably challenging for themselves, and they get feedback of results in time to correct their behaviour. Without feedback, no learning can take place.



- Variety. People need to vary their work to avoid extremes of fatigue and boredom. On the other hand, if people have so much variety due to too much work, they can become overwhelmed which leads to high levels of stress. This is a common problem in the modern workplace, where the call is for people to continuously do more with less.
- Mutual support and respect. People need to get help and respect from their co-workers.
- Meaningfulness. Meaningfulness includes both the worth and the quality of a product, and having knowledge of the whole product and process. The more an individual can see the bigger picture or the bigger process, the more meaningful their work becomes.
- A desirable future. People need a job that leads them to a desirable future for themselves, not a dead-end. This desirable future is not necessarily a promotion, but a career path that will continue to allow for personal growth and increase in skills.

Having scored themselves, the team and manager then discuss their scores in an open forum. This exercise quickly gives the manager and team a good idea of the current morale of the team, and where the social system can be improved.

The second part of the workshop focuses on the technical delivery side of the system. Here the entire team analyses the workflow process as it currently happens within the department. Teams map out their current workflow process on chart paper or in Participlan (a process mapping tool), so that everyone has a clear understanding of how work happens in the unit. The team then discusses key problems that exist in the current workflow. They also identify important decisions that occur in the process, integration points with other business processes and departments and the underlying assumptions. If necessary they re-design the business processes to make them more efficient and effective. Having done that, the team then draws up the list of required competencies (skills, knowledge and behaviour) that the team needs in order to effectively implement and manage the workflow process. The team then draws up a competency matrix in which they first rate themselves personally against the required competencies and then they rate themselves collectively as a team. The net result is a

competency gap analysis for each individual and for the team as a whole. From this, the team is able to draw up a training and development plan for the immediate future.

Having been a part of this process, the manager will have a very good idea of the social and technical issues that he or she is confronted with within the areas they manage. Another way of putting this, is that the manager will have a very good idea of the issues in the Lower-Left and Right Quadrants, namely the collective aspects of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. They have a good idea of the business context in which they find themselves.

The next part of the managerial leadership development model is aimed at the Upper-Left and Right Quadrants, namely the individual aspects of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. It is the start of the personal journey of self discovery with special reference to the question, “*What am I doing to perpetuate the system?*” In this part of the process the manager can elect one of two options. The first elective is to make use of an executive coach for a minimum of six months. The aim of coaching is to allow the manager to explore through experiential learning; intrapersonal, interpersonal and transpersonal aspects of themselves. The assumption being, that the more self-aware the individual can become, the more effective they will be at managing and leading others. In addition the coaching process can be used to address developmental and performance areas in the individual, as agreed upon by the individual, their manager and human resources. However, as the Corporate Leadership Council (2003) has pointed out, even though executives have a strong preference for executive coaching they are concerned about the cost of coaching interventions as opposed to other leadership development activities. External professional coaching is possibly the most expensive option in leadership development interventions; the same applies for T-Systems. Coaching is by far the most expensive leadership developmental option available. Executive coaching can vary from R30 000 to R80 000 for a six month intervention. The ideal and stated first option for T-Systems, is to have coaching available for all managers. Economic reality, however, does not allow for that. As a result, a second option had to be explored and incorporated into the managerial leadership developmental model.

The second option is the one year Programme In Personal and Professional Leadership (P.P.L), developed and run by the University of Johannesburg. The programme was chosen because of its strong links to experiential learning. It is a modular programme, with theoretical input for certain blocks of time at the university. The managers then have to go and apply the theory and write assignments on the work. Added to that, are reflective workshops that are held on the companies' premises, in between university modules, which are facilitated by the faculty of the university. The advantage of this programme is the cost involved, which is R2 200 per individual per annum. The current thinking is that executive coaching be reserved for business line managers and above and that the P.P.L. programme be used to develop more junior managers. The Executive have, however, agreed that where it can be justified, Executive Coaching can be made available to more junior managers.

Phase three of the model expects the manager to take responsibility and accountability for their own personal and leadership development by offering them various training modules to choose from. This is a complete philosophical turn around for the company. Previously, HR took on the responsibility for deciding what courses the managers should attend. What they learnt from this research project is that people learn faster and more effectively when they take responsibility for their own learning and development agenda. It is a bold move to move away from a very paternalistic culture. The modules range from doing an MBA, continuing with coaching, marriage guidance, meditation, management-one-on-one, transformational leadership (Tavistock Approach), etc. These modules are currently being sourced, developed and put into place.

Towards the end of 2004 the research results and the principles and guidelines for the new managerial leadership programme were presented to the Executive Committee of T-Systems. It was emphasised that the new managerial leadership development programme is a development programme that runs over a two to three year period. Previously it was believed that leadership development could be done in a one year time frame. The Executive accepted the model and gave it the go-ahead. The next step was to present the model to the various Management committees of the company, who also accepted the model. The first part of the model (half of phase one) was piloted in the biggest division of the organisation from November 2004 till January

2005. The project went so well, that the executive now want the last half of phase one to be implemented. The next large scale coaching intervention has been launched in March 2005. It is the start of implementing the new managerial leadership development model for T-Systems South Africa.

### **6.3.2 Implications of the research project for the profession of coaching.**

As a result of the quality of this research project, Professor Frans Cilliers of the University of South Africa invited the author to present the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and the preliminary research findings at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Industrial Psychology Conference in Johannesburg, South Africa on the 23 – 25 June 2004. Not only does it show that the model and the research are of a very high academic standard, but it is a major achievement for the Executive Coaching profession in that the author was the only non-psychologist presenting at that conference. It shows that the work that was done in the field of Executive Coaching is of a high enough academic standard to be acceptable to the Industrial Psychology community in South Africa. Furthermore, given the quality of the qualitative data that the research project generated, Professor Frans Cilliers requested my permission to analyse the data from a psychodynamic point of view. He then presented the same data from a psychodynamic point of view at the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Industrial Psychology Conference. This is further evidence that this research project has contributed towards facilitating a good working relationship between the Executive Coaching and Industrial and Organisational Psychological professions in South Africa. This relationship was enhanced even further, when Professor AM Viviers of the University of South Africa invited the author to do the same presentation to the 2004 Masters Students of the Department of Industrial and Organisational Psychology. Based on feedback obtained from the students it was apparent that the presentation added value to their perspective on the role of Industrial and Organisational Psychology in modern organisations and enhanced their ability to conceptualise creative theory building and practical research based on theoretical principles. This research project has therefore contributed to raising the academic standard of the executive coaching profession within South Africa. Further proof of this was when I was invited to present my model and research findings at the first Consulting Psychology Conference in South Africa on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> November 2005. Unlike other conferences where people are invited to

present proposals for papers, this conference was by invitation only. All in all ten speakers were invited to present at the conference. Of those, nine of the presenters were professors in their respective fields, I was the only non professor invited to present at the conference.

In December 2004 T-Systems International became the main sponsors for Team Shosholoza, the South African yachting team entered for the Americas Cup Challenge in 2007. In March 2005, based directly on the research project that was done with TSSA and subsequent leadership development model, the Managing Director of TSSA contracted me to become the Executive Coach for Team Shosholoza. As Deputy Managing Director of the South African Americas Cup Challenge Company, he was concerned about the lack of integration between the various aspects and functions of the campaign. The lack of integration was in all functions, especially between the design, building and sailing teams. I was asked to help coach the management team in setting up the appropriate business processes, structures and procedures and to help facilitate experiential learning between all the teams and on an individual level. The contract therefore involves coaching the individual sailors and managers of the various functions. This project opens up a wonderful opportunity to test the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model within the sporting environment. The research done by Upton (2004) has already shown that the South African Cricket community sees the need for a more integrated approach to sports coaching. Upton's (2004) research showed that within the South African Cricketing context coaching was limited to the right-hand quadrants in Wilber's (1995) model. His research showed that a number of senior players, and more forward-thinking coaches and administrators felt that there was a need to work with the left-hand quadrants and that it was a vital component that was currently being ignored by coaches. A similar situation prevailed within Team Shosholoza. Coaching was limited to the right-hand quadrants, where personal fitness training, diet and nutrition had been catered for through coaches and dieticians from the Sports Science Institute of South Africa. Sailing skills were being taught by the skipper, sailing manager and external professional sailing coaches. On the organisational front, a very simple management structure had been put in place. What was not being catered for, was the left-hand quadrants. On the individual level, nobody was coaching the sailors on the internal, mental aspect of sailing. Based on interviews with the sailing crew, they felt that there was a big need within the team to

have somebody to talk to, to help them reflect on how to do things better and on how to improve their mental side of the sport. There was a distinct lack of a common vision and purpose between everybody involved in the campaign. The designers did their own thing without communicating with the sailing team and vice versa. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is currently being used to help address these issues in a more integrated way. It is not that one discipline has the answer. Each discipline has an aspect of the truth. The question is not which one is more important, but how do we integrate all these disciplines to create a more effective campaign.

The question that can be asked is, how does a model that has been developed for the business context work within the sporting context? This is actually not as uncommon as many of us would like to think. There is a growing openness in all fields and disciplines to learn from other disciplines. Galvin in Butler (1999) explores how sports psychology can learn and apply organisational developmental models to sport. Whether it is sport or business, people need to be aligned behind a common vision; structures and processes need to be put into place to enable that vision to become a reality, and lastly people's behaviour needs to be rewarded when they live up to the culture and aims of the organisation and vice versa. All sporting campaigns are, in fact, no different to running a complex organisation. An Americas Cup campaign is, in fact, very expensive and complex to manage. Designing and building an America's Cup yacht is a very complex process that demands very sophisticated engineering and scientific skills. This in turn demands some very sophisticated information technology, design and engineering processes. Once the yacht is built and sailing, there needs to be continuous feedback and communication between the design team and the sailors to learn what is working and what is not working, so that that information can be used to design and build the second yacht. Add to that the fact that this sport is totally determined by the prevailing weather conditions and you end up with a very complex system. Hence the need for continuous learning in this sport is vital. The only competitive advantage any team can have is to learn faster than their competitors. Effective team learning is totally dependent on how well individuals within a team can learn. The Integrated Experiential Coaching Model helps to address the issue of improving individual learning by using experiential learning as the injunction. Furthermore, experiential learning is context and content independent. It applies to learning a business skill just as well as it does to learning a sporting skill.

Although the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model was developed specifically for the business environment, it is now contributing to the world of sports coaching. Only time will tell whether it can be implemented and managed successfully within a sports campaign like the Americas Cup. Be that as it may, it is already contributing a more integrated approach than current sport coaching models.

### **6.3.3 Implications of the research project for the author**

This has been an intense Experiential Learning journey for me. The most challenging and difficult by far, was the abstract conceptualisation part of the journey. It involved the development of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model's theoretical framework. It is a synthesis of twenty years of concrete experience and fourteen years of reading and research. The biggest challenge was to decide what to include, what to exclude and to what depth I should go. Wilber and Almaas' work alone, is enough to keep anybody busy for years. It is a natural tendency for any student to feel that there is so much more that could and should be incorporated into the literature study and the theoretical model. There is so much more that I need to incorporate into the existing model, there are so many areas to explore and expand on. I am left with the feeling that all that has been developed is the skeleton of the theory. In the end, however, every study does have to have a cut off point. Pure economics (earning in Rands and paying for my studies in Pounds Sterling) necessitates being practical instead of being more idealistic. The exciting thing, however, is that the current theoretical model is not the end; but the start of a journey. There is the realisation that this research project has only laid the foundations for a lifetime's work of applied research. It is the start of a lifelong journey to become a reflective practitioner. After the completion of this research project, the theoretical model will be expanded even further, with the ultimate aim of publishing it as a book. Most books on executive coaching seem to have either a psychological or business consulting bias. This model adds a third theoretical alternative to the profession; namely, an integrated experiential learning approach.

On the practical side, this research project has greatly contributed to me becoming a better coach. Prior to starting this project, I had not heard of phenomenology. On researching the various research methodologies, and based on discussions with Professors Mike Van Oudshoorn and David Lane; it was decided to use

Transcendental Phenomenology as my research methodology. At first it was seen purely as a research methodology, but the more I worked with the methodology, the more I realised that it, in itself, is actually a coaching methodology. In a sense it taught me to be more open and to stop using various models as a filter through which to listen to other people. It made me realise that all models, including the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, are only models. All models are only limited ways of seeing reality. Transcendental phenomenology taught me to be more open and more present to my clients, to listen to what they say and to be inquisitive about where the current experience was taking them. Any model has the danger of wanting to steer people down a certain path. The danger of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model is to think that the higher levels of development are more important or better and then to try and steer the client to those levels. Transcendental phenomenology has helped me to become more open and to stay or go with the client where they want to go. It has made me aware of just how little I actually do know. At its core, human life and what makes each of us tick is still a big mystery. This project has left me with a sense of mystery and awe about what it means to be human. I am more convinced than ever, that there are levels of consciousness and that experiential learning can facilitate human growth and development. However, I am left with an absolute respect and appreciation for the uniqueness of every individual that I am privileged to work with. Every single person is unique. We all have our very own unique stories to tell, every single one of us is a unique expression of the Divine. No one model works for everybody. Sure, this research project showed that general themes could be extracted from the experience of the group as a whole, but how they experienced these themes was unique to every individual. Same coach, same model, yet every person experienced it very differently. The meaning extracted from the experience was unique to the individuals. When I read the essays after the research has been done, I am amazed and feel blessed that I could have been part of the process, but I am left with the feeling of ,why do we have to do this kind of research anyway? I feel that I have taken something away from the individual experience by trying to discover the essence of the experience of the group. Is it not good enough to just have had people express their experience, and to leave it there? It was their experience and it had an existential meaning for them. Having just read another book about Jan Smuts, I cannot but help feel that this project has just validated Smut's idea of Holism. I quoted Wilber extensively in this project, yet the true genius of Wilber's work is to be found in



Smuts. I am of the opinion that Wilber has not given Smuts the credit that is due to him. This project has left me with a real sense of admiration for Smuts. I now agree with Smuts that every individual is unique and that each one of us is a creative expression of evolution. Maybe that is why I am left feeling that I have done every individual a disservice by trying to extract their collective experience. But then again, that is where academia is at the moment. The real challenge for me is to go back and read Smuts again to try and study his method of arriving at the science of Personology. Having done this project I am convinced that Smuts saw a greater vision than most of us see, and that it is worth pursuing. Be that as it may somehow every person that partook in this project had become a little more self-aware and hence matured a little more. If that is all I can ever achieve with his work, then I am more than satisfied that I have made some small contribution to making the world a little more aware.

I am more convinced that what the world needs, is mass customised learning and that experiential learning is a wonderful process to facilitate this kind of learning. With hindsight, the more I reflect on this research experience the clearer it becomes to me that the real essence of what he can do within the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model, is to facilitate experiential learning on a one-on-one basis. In essence, that is all that I work with, every thing else is just a tool that he uses, as and when I need it. So for example; story telling, narrative, 360 degree feedback and shadowing, are tools used to facilitate a better understanding of the person's concrete experience. Personal learning contracts, journaling and meditation, for example, are tools that help to facilitate reflective observation. Systems thinking and stratified systems thinking facilitate abstract conceptualisation. It has dawned on me that the world is filled with tools that we often mistakenly believe to be the answer or the truth. In the end they are just tools that facilitate an aspect of experiential learning. This realisation has brought with it a tremendous sense of freedom. All tools have their place and can make a valuable contribution in the experiential learning process. The art is to learn which aspects they facilitate and when it is best to use or not use them. There is no need to defend a tool or model; they all have a relevant part to play. Not one of them is the answer or the silver bullet. Human life is far too complex to be captured or explained by a singular model or tool. I therefore complete this research project having learnt a tremendous amount. Yet at the same time I am starting afresh,

knowing that there is so little I know and very excited to realise that there is still such a huge mystery to go and explore.

Lastly, having now done both qualitative and quantitative research, I can honestly say that I much prefer qualitative research. It is much more difficult and exciting to do than quantitative research. Throughout this project I have been excited and totally involved with what I was doing. This project has been one of being in the flow. For my masters degree I analysed twenty years of data, doing multiple correlations and advanced statistical analysis. In the end, doing correlations made me a technical expert, but it did not leave me with the sense of wonder and excitement that this project has. In my years of experience, especially when working with mergers, I noticed that correlations and financial data do not excite people. What gives people meaning through the difficult times of mergers and acquisitions is not the logical, rational, or financial explanations; it is the human stories that they tell each other, it is the discovering of their own personal meaning within that experience. Quantitative research, so highly prized by academia and the business community, cannot capture that kind of essence. In the end, organisations are made up of the human beings who manage and operate within them, and it is qualitative research that can help give us better insights into the inner working of the person. This project has convinced me that we need to have both kinds of research within organisations. Unfortunately there is still a tendency to rate qualitative research as not being real research, while quantitative research is real and scientific. Hopefully this research project can in some small way start to change that perception. Qualitative research can and is exciting research to do and in my case has lead to immense personal growth and development.

#### **6.4 Limitations**

The first limitation that must be considered is my subjectivity. This research project took place within the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. This is a theoretical model that I had developed. Secondly I was the coach who applied that model in the coaching experience. Although I made every attempt to be as objective as possible, it is possible that an element of subjective bias can still be contained in the final result. It must however be mentioned that Cilliers (2004) analysed the same data

from a systems psychodynamic stance. His findings identified a similar movement from dependency towards more self autonomy.

A second limitation has to be the sample bias. Firstly the sample was restricted to one company and I did not select the sample. T-Systems South Africa selected the managers they wanted to have coached in the project. The people selected were considered the future leadership potential of the company. By their very natures this is a group of people who want to get ahead in life, they are positive and want to learn. The question has to be asked if the same result would have been achieved if a more random sample was selected. The sample was made up of people who in a sense had already achieved and proved themselves within the company and coaching could just have provided another opportunity for them to apply themselves. The other issue related to sample bias was the lack of gender and racial diversity in the group. There was only one woman and one person of colour. The rest were all white males. It is possible that similar themes arose because these white males are all struggling with a common issue, which is their future within the South African business context.

The third possible limitation could be due to data collection. Of the thirteen participants, only three have English as their official mother tongue language. The rest are actually Afrikaans. At the outset of this project they were given the opportunity to write their reflective essays in Afrikaans. All the participants chose to write the essays in English. This could be due to the fact that as an international company all official correspondence is carried out in English. As a result I am of the opinion that some of the richness of the experience could have been lost in the process of expressing themselves in a second language. From the essays it is very clear that some individuals struggled with English grammar. In such circumstances it is very difficult for individuals to fully express how they feel. With hindsight, unstructured interviews could have been used to explore the issues or experiences even further.

## 6.5 Recommendations

This research project generated the hypothesis that the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model facilitated both the prehension and transformational dimensions of Experiential Learning in individuals. The co-researchers understood and owned some very significant behavioural dynamics inside of themselves, as well as between themselves and other significant colleagues. This underlines the possibilities of coaching as a staff development intervention to facilitate self authorisation by working through ones own unconscious and dynamic behavioural issues. It is hypothesised that coaching presented from this model empowers individual employees to work towards their own cognitive insight, the experience of emotional meaningfulness and taking of responsibility for their own growth and career development.

This hypothesis now needs to be tested empirically. In the ongoing process of developing the new leadership model for TSSA, Sonja Botha has registered for an M.Phil in HR Management with the University of Johannesburg. It is a structured master's degree in Personal and Professional Leadership. For her thesis she is going to write up the leadership model as presented in Figure 6.2, and develop quantitative measurements for phase two of the model. This research project explored the Upper-Left Quadrant of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. Her research will be focused on the Upper and Lower-Right Quadrants, trying to quantitatively measure the effectiveness of executive coaching on the business. Her research stems from a request by the Executive of TSSA for us to find a more quantifiable way to measure the effectiveness of Executive Coaching. The Executive are very excited about what this project achieved and they can see changes in the people who were coached, hence their ongoing support for Executive Coaching. However, being technical business people, they have asked us to try and find a more quantifiable way to assess the effectiveness of Executive Coaching. For this research to be meaningful, it will have to take place within the context of the company's Balanced Scorecard. Any person who has ever done any work with the Balanced Scorecard will know that quantifiable financial measurements are not a problem. As we move through the other perspectives of the Balanced Scorecard strategies and measurements become more and more vague. Even Norton, co-founder of the Balanced Scorecard, in the forward to Becker, Huselid and Ulrich's (2001) book, *The HR Scorecard. Linking people, strategy, and*

*performance* mentions that in their experience, executives have no problem defining the strategies and measurements for the financial and operational process improvement. There is less consensus around the customer strategies i.e. target segments and their value proposition, although Norton has seen an improvement in this area over the years. But in terms of the learning and growth perspective and how to measure that perspective, there seems to be no clarity at all. In Norton's view there seems to be no real framework for thinking about this subject at all. Unfortunately, this area has seen hardly any movement or development since the inception of the Balanced Scorecard. Becker et al. (2001) has started to do research in this area, which resulted in the publication of their book. It is an area that needs to be researched empirically, especially in the new economy where human capital is becoming the foundation of value creation. Trying to quantify the effectiveness of coaching can therefore be a very valuable area to research. Not only will it add to the profession of coaching, in addition it could add to the knowledge base of implementing and improving the effectiveness of the Balanced Scorecard and add to the research work of Becker et al. (2001).

My thinking is that any attempt to quantifiably measure the effectiveness of executive coaching should be tied to the outputs in the business processes that the coached individual is responsible for managing. So for example, if turn around times are improving, or if quality is improving then learning must be taking place. On the other hand, if turn around times or quality do not improve, or deteriorate, then learning and growth are not taking place. Obviously this is a very simplified example, however, I believe that if we want to measure the effectiveness of executive coaching on the business, then we need to measure the output produced by the business processes that the individual manages and leads. Asking individuals to rate how much value they place on the coaching they received is not the right way to try and quantify the effectiveness of coaching. One way of approaching this study is to measure the outputs of the area that the individual manages before they receive coaching. Put the individual on coaching for a certain period of time. Allow for a few months of experimentation and then look at the improvement in output of the area again. This is, of course assuming, that all other factors stay the same, which in reality they rarely do. Organizations are very complex interrelated systems, but by focusing on the outputs of the processes we can try and be more objective. Will we ever arrive at a pure objective

cause and effect relationship between coaching and the output of the business process? We can only answer that question by doing the empirical research.

Another potentially interesting research project involves one of the central assumptions of Stratified Systems Theory. According to Jaques and Clement (1997) managerial leadership competencies have the following characteristics;

- **(CP)** Cognitive complexity is the only component that grows by true maturation. That is to say, it grows in a regular and predictable manner as the person matures. This maturing process makes it possible to evaluate and predict where the person's cognitive potential is likely to be in three, five or ten years' time. Based on their research, Jaques and Clement (1997) were able to develop the Potential Progress Data Sheet which plots age on the horizontal axis and time horizon on the vertical axis. Time horizon is the longest time-span (level of work) at which a person can work if the other competencies are in place. The Potential Progress Data Sheet makes it possible to predict the level of work that an individual could potentially do at a certain age. One of the critical features is that people actually change the nature of the cognitive processes that they use as they mature from one stratum to the other. So for example the cognitive process will change from serial processing to parallel processing when the person matures from stratum – III/IV into stratum – IV. However, and here is the crux of their theory, because it is a maturation process little can be done to speed up the growth of the process. Career Path Appreciation (CPA) is the method used to test and predict an individual's cognitive capability and potential.
- Values can change or not, depending upon experience and influences.
- **(K/S)** Knowledge and skills depend on the individuals, education, training and educational opportunities.
- **(Wi)** Wisdom can or may not increase.
- **(-T)** Personality characteristics tend to endure and be stable over time. They can however change due to traumatic experiences or through therapy.

As a result, Jaques and Clement (1997) believe that there are five methods that can be used to facilitate managerial leadership in individuals. The five interventions are;

- Coaching which is an important influence on values and wisdom. It can and should add to the individual's knowledge.
- Teaching imparts knowledge to the individual through lectures, practice and discussions. It is more focused on Abstract Conceptualization.
- Training, focused on helping the individual develop and enhance their skills through on the job training or simulations. It is more focused on Active Experimentation.
- Mentoring is usually undertaken by a manager-one removed and helps the individual develop sound judgment and wisdom.
- Counseling relates more to when an individual is facing some personal problems and can at time require therapy. It is therefore more concerned with personality characteristics.

Based on this research project, I believe that Jaques and Clement (1997) have defined the role that coaching can play too narrowly. It would be really interesting to test their research findings or hypothesis that little can be done to speed up the growth of the cognitive process because it is maturation process. CPA is a well-known and respected assessment tool used by many of the large corporates in South Africa and around the world, which means that large databases of CPA assessments are in existence. What I am proposing is that a research project be set up, that assesses a number of individuals' cognitive complexities and potential through CPA assessments. Those individuals should then be coached within the framework of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model for a year. After that, year or after a period, of time they should be assessed again against the first predicted assessment to see if coaching can actually help accelerate or speed up the maturation of cognitive capability. Or alternatively that coaching within the context of the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model can shift the predicted curve into another stratum. The hypothesis is that too many individuals, at the time of their CPA assessments, are still too narrow in their thinking. We have seen in this research project that people expanded their thinking into all four quadrants and even into different levels of consciousness. The question that is left in my mind is, did the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model facilitate that movement and growth, or were the individuals just naturally maturing into that cognitive stratum and as a result it was natural for them to explore that realm? Or is it a function of both, namely;

natural cognitive maturation and the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model? I believe that these questions can only be answered by doing the research.

## **6.6 Final reflections on learning.**

The first thing that strikes me as I reflect on this project is the seemingly open contradictions and differences between what happened in practice and the theoretical Integrated Experiential Coaching Model. The first contradiction is that in this model it was emphasised that coaching is not about therapy but about facilitating experiential learning in order to facilitate growth and development. It is and was about improving performance. Yet the data shows that some co-researchers found it meaningful to work on defining their purpose in life. Others found it meaningful to work on certain spiritual beliefs. These types of issues are existential in nature and by working through these issues the co-researchers found it to be therapeutic. This raises the question whether this model is not about therapy. I think it must be pointed out that the model does not deny that therapeutic moments can and do occur. Nor does it deny that therapy or therapeutic techniques can be used as a coaching model. I do however; believe that only certified psychologists should practice therapy. Given that I am not a psychologist I do not believe that I am qualified to work in that domain. In my training for the ministry we were trained on how to identify issues that should be referred to qualified professionals as and when it was required. In my model I make it very clear that I do not work with any pathology, and when it is recognized I immediately refer the client to a psychologist or psychiatrist. And where that does happen I am happy to work with the therapist. The emphasis in this model is not, however, on therapeutic moments or issues but on experiential learning and what the individual can learn from the experience whatever it may be. Going into the future I do not see myself changing my view on this position. I think it is unethical for me as a coach to work in the domain of therapy if I am not a qualified professional.

The second difference involved the use of the Personal Learning Contract (PLC). In the theoretical model the PLC was seen as being the means by which the experiential learning would be recorded and analysed in order to make the learning experience explicit. I started with the assumption that it would be a very useful learning tool that everybody would find easy to use and work with. In reality, that was not the case.



Some co-researchers refused to use it after a few sessions. They saw it as being too much like homework. When I started the project I was hoping to use the PLC's as secondary data sources for the research. Halfway through the coaching sessions I realised that not every coachee was using the PLC on a regular basis and that it would not be possible to use it as a data source. What I learnt is that the PLC works very well with people who like the coaching sessions to be more structured. Others preferred a more unstructured approach to the coaching sessions and for them the PLC was a hindrance and obstacle to learning. In fact, I soon learnt that the PLC when enforced could actually perpetuate certain problems. Early in the coaching project I recognised a very interesting trend developing. Coachees would start the coaching session by apologising that they had not filled in the PLC. I noticed that they saw the PLC as something that they had to do too satisfy me. It was not about their learning, but a chore they had to do to keep me happy. Even worse, some coachees were working on issues of non delivery. They did not have enough time to deliver. So by not completing the PLC they were starting to feel even guiltier about their non delivery. Here was just another thing or area in which they could not deliver. When I picked up this trend I immediately stopped emphasising the use of the PLC. I only carried on using it with those coachees who found it meaningful. As a result I now see and use the PLC as just another tool that could be used by some coachees if they find it to be a meaningful tool or approach. Learning conversations is still central to my model, but the PLC is not as important in practice as was made out in the theoretical model. The big learning for me was that even the best intended tools can in fact perpetuate certain underlying problems. The lesson for me was very clear, that as a coach I must always be open and not get attached to any technique or model even my own model. Reality is far too complex to be described by any model. Any model is only a tool that should be used with the greatest of care. The person is always more important than any model or technique.

The third contradiction, which is almost too embarrassing to mention, is how I contradicted my own model in the way that I wrote up this project. I started the theoretical model by arguing very passionately for the inclusion of the left quadrants of the model. My argument was and still is that the business world and academia should recognise and take cognisance of the inner world or domain of the individual and the communal. Yet in writing up this project I completely ignored my own inner

experience by not bringing it into the project. I wrote the project up as if it was a complete right hand activity. I even went as far as to write in the third person. When doctors Armsby and Garvey asked me in my viva why I had written in the third person, I responded that this was an academic exercise. To which I was politely challenged to challenge my own assumptions about what academia is. So here I was passionately challenging the purely empirical scientific method, but in practice perpetuating the very system that I was so passionately criticising. As I said it is almost too embarrassing to mention, especially at doctoral level. On the upside however, it does validate my argument in my model that coaching is a good medium to facilitate reflection-on-action. My own experience that I have just mentioned as well as my experience of coaching others has shown me just how easy it is for all of us to get trapped in a way of thinking and doing. It is the coach as an objective outsider, with no emotional attachments, that can help facilitate this reflection-on-action. The data in this research project supports that, as did my viva experience. Doctors Armsby and Garvey had no emotional attachment to my work so they were able to facilitate that reflection-on-action for me. It is just a pity that the process only allowed for the viva at the end of the project. I for one would have found it very helpful to have had a few such interactions along the journey. I found the viva experience very valuable in facilitating my reflection-on-action. This whole experience helped me to validate that part of my model even further.

Another aspect of the model that was highlighted in the research was that of story telling. The co-researchers found it meaningful to tell their story in a non judgmental environment. I suppose like everybody I was disappointed that I had to make revisions and amendments to the project; I just wanted to get it finished with and too get on with my life. At first I felt overwhelmed by the feedback. I especially battled with Doctor Garvey's point that he did not see my personal signature on the work. How could that be? This was my model that I developed, I did the work and the research and I wrote it up. It was my work so how could he say it missed my personal signature? As I reread the feedback over and over and reflected on it, I eventually realised that what was missing for the examiners was my story. All the feedback was pointing to the story behind how the work was done and my role in that. They were asking me to validate my own experience. This has been an ongoing issue for me on this programme. Professor David Lane has continuously challenged me to honour my own experience.

Sadly I thought I had made major advancements in this area, but this experience highlighted the fact that it is an area that I continuously need to work on.

I realised that I tend to shy away from honouring my own experience; it is a false sense of humility. Yet as I started to amend the project work and add in my own experience by telling the story behind the story, I found that I was actually starting to enjoy it. I found it liberating and energising to tell my story within this context. By asking me to tell my story, the examiners gave me permission to validate my story and my experience. I found it to be an empowering experience. As a result I think the final project is more holistic and aligned with my model.

Secondly I think the experience gave me a better understanding or insight into why my co-researchers found story telling to be such an empowering experience. There is something meaningful and powerful in validating who we are by being allowed to tell our own story. As a result I am using story telling more and more in my coaching. My experience has however taught me that as a coach, I need to listen to people's stories with a healthy dose of scepticism. We all have blind spots and there can be a certain amount of exaggeration. It is the coach's role to challenge the story and the perceived blind spots in a non judgemental way. I think it has, however, made me realise that people are tired of being told what is wrong with them.

By telling their story they actually do start to recognise and validate what is right with them. This has led me to explore positive psychology further. In this regard I am playing and experimenting with the Clinton Strengthfinder® in my coaching. The aim of this tool is to help individuals discover their five biggest strengths and to use them optimally. The idea being that if every individual maximises their strengths and manages their weaknesses they will be successful. The emphasis moves to developing strengths rather than trying to eradicate weaknesses, which ties in very well with Jacques leadership competencies. This further enhances the idea that my model is closer to Peltier's definition of coaching which is aimed at working with growth and development as opposed to having a therapy based approach, where therapy is defined as working with pathological behaviour. My model tries to identify what is good about people and maximising those aspects. It does not mean that I deny the need to work on weaknesses; in my model the aim is to manage those weaknesses but not to

eradicate them. The emphasis is on what is right as opposed to what is wrong.

A natural question that arises at the end of the programme is whether it was worthwhile and whether I would do it again? I started this programme because on one level I felt inadequate as a coach. I knew I had the business experience and some experience in working with people from my days in the ministry. But somehow I felt I needed to obtain some professional qualification. The further I got into the programme the more I realised just how much experience I had. All that was needed was for me to integrate years of experience and theory. What this programme did do was to help me make all my assumptions and thinking explicit and to test it in an open forum. The emphasis on experiential learning and personal construct psychology strongly facilitated the process of making my thinking explicit. Some of the theoretical input on the programme I found disappointing. It was at that time that I realised just how much experience I actually had.

I started off being incredibly idealistic, my aim being to develop the ultimate coaching model. The more the model developed and the more I used it in practice the more I realised that it is not the model that is important but who I am as a person. Who I am is more important than any model. The model worked for me because it is who I am, it is my thinking and way of doing the work. The question that keeps going around in my mind, is whether the results are as a result of the model, or due to me just being me, or a combination of the two. I think that the building of the theoretical model and the practical application of it taught me that a good coach is more about being than doing. The more I stopped trying to be a good coach the more the relationship developed. But then again this is a real chicken and egg situation, was I relaxing because I had this insight, or because I had made my model and process explicit and as a result I felt very comfortable within the framework that I had developed. At this point I cannot honestly answer the question.

However, if being is more important than doing, then I have to ask myself whether I would not have grown more as a person if I had put the same amount of money, time and energy into some inner disciplines like meditation and yoga. This in turn would have led to me being a better coach today. Somehow I am left with the feeling that the latter is true. Coaching is not about how good or academically correct your model is, it

is about how comfortable you as a coach are with yourself. The more I can accept myself and the more comfortable I am with myself, the easier it is for me to allow others to be themselves. The less likely I am to project my issues, fantasies and ideals on to the coachee. And if that is the case, more intense inner work would have been more worthwhile. But then again, it is easy to write this with the experience of hindsight.

The other idea I started with was that maybe one day I could enter academia. My experience on this programme has shattered that ideal. I have spent the last twenty years working in business, a large part of that has involved in improving organisational effectiveness and efficiencies. In order to survive, organisations have to adapt to constant changes in the environment. I have always found that exciting about business. An endless irritation has been the lack of effectiveness and efficiency of this programme. The amount of time that has been wasted as a result of having to rework assignments due to incorrect information and instructions has been immense. Due to the high level of frustration I even tried to change to a university in South Africa. That was even more disastrous. My model was too interdisciplinary for their liking. The business schools had no understanding of phenomenological research; they could not get past which variable I was testing. The concept of hypothesis generation versus hypothesis testing was just too foreign for them to comprehend. I journaled all these experiences and later spent some time reflecting on them. The common theme that arose was that I found that my interaction with universities tended to drain my energy. Universities tend to be more set in their ways than business. Coaching and business on the other hand energised me. As a result I now know that I do prefer working in the business environment. I must, however, mention that within the university context, like most organisations, I did have the joy of working with individuals who were highly professional in what they did. I am very thankful that I had the opportunity to work with Professors Frans Cilliers and David Lane. Like good coaches, both were able to challenge me to bring out the best in me. Frans kept sending me back when I was doing the analysis challenging me to do more with the data, moving into higher and higher levels of abstraction. David on the other hand, continuously challenged me to honour my own experience.

In conclusion then, I think that I have become a better coach as a result of this

programme. It has helped me to honour my own experience, to take that experience and develop the Integrated Experiential Coaching Model and to test and research the model in practice. In the processes I have built up enough credibility to be invited on two occasions to present my work at two conferences in South Africa and to lecture on the subject at the University of South Africa. As a result it has given me more confidence to go and sell my services in the South African market. I can market myself much more effectively because I can make my work and my model explicit and show that it has been researched and examined. In the end I am thankful that I did it through the National Centre for Workbased Learning because it enabled me to become a better practitioner through continuously challenging me to reflect on my experience, my work and my model. In so doing, it kept me grounded in practice, when it could have been so easy to escape into an academic ivory tower. At the same time it highlighted for me the fact that being is more important than doing. In so doing, it highlighted my areas for continuous professional development namely; meditation and yoga.

## **6.7 Summary**

This chapter started with a general reflection on how the findings of this research project tied back to various literature sources, with special reference to the Quaker Persuasion Model (Spears 1998), research undertaken by the Corporate leadership Council (2003) on executive coaching and Mintzberg's (2004) eight propositions for managerial development. It then looked at the conclusions of the research in terms of its implications for T-Systems South Africa, the profession of coaching and for the author. The limitations of the research project were identified and two future research directions were identified. Finally, it ended with some final reflections on learning.

# Appendix 1

## Wilber's Model

### Wilber's principles

The following principles form the basis of Wilber's (1995) integral model and his evolutionary / developmental thinking:

- That reality is composed of holons (whole/parts) and not things or processes. A Holon is defined as *“that which, being a whole in one context, is simultaneously a part of another.”* (1995: 18). By this he means that reality is composed of wholes that are simultaneously parts of other wholes. Even processes exist as holons within other processes. Therefore there are no wholes and there are no parts, they only exist as whole/parts. Because holons exist within holons within holons, there is no ultimate “Whole”. As a result everything is open to questioning because everything is a context within a context forever.
- Self-preservation, self-adaptation, self-transcendence and self-dissolution are four fundamental capacities displayed by holons.
  - Self-preservation. All holons have a capacity to preserve their own wholeness or autonomy. Although all holons exist within a context it is not the relationship that defines it but its own individual form, structure or pattern. A holon is defined by its relatively coherent and autonomous patterns that it displays.
  - Self-adaptation. Not only does a holon function as a self-preserving whole, being part of another holon or context it must adapt to the other holons. Because it is a part, it needs to adapt and fit into its existing environment. As a whole it preserves itself, as a part it must fit in. Hence any holon has a tendency for agency and communion. Its agency is its ability to express its wholeness to preserve its autonomy. Its communion is its ability as a part to be in relationship to something larger.
  - Self-transcendence (self - transformation). When different wholes come together to form a new and different whole, transformation has taken place.

Transformation results in something new and novel, a new whole emerges. This is achieved through “symmetry breaks” in the evolutionary process. It is the ability of a system to go beyond itself and to introduce something new and novel. Evolution is not only a continuous process; important discontinuities can take place as well.

- Self-dissolution. Not only can a holon build up, it can also break down. This is due to the constant tension between a holon’s agency and communion. The more a holon preserves its wholeness (agency) the less it serves its communion (being a part). It is the conflict between the holon’s rights (agency) and its responsibilities (communion). It is the conflict between agency and communion that can introduce pathology into the holon. Vertical tension is between self-transcendence and self-dissolution, the tendency is to build up or to break down. In self-transcendence, for example, particles build up into atoms, atoms build up into molecules, molecules build up into cells, etc. In self-dissolution the process is reversed, cells break down into molecules, molecules break down into atoms, and atoms break down into particles. Hence every holon is a subholon (part of another holon) and a superholon (itself containing other holons) simultaneously.
- Holons emerge. Due to the fact that holons have the capacity to self-transcend, new holons emerge. Central to this principle is the idea that the emerging holon is not completely determined by that which went before it because it contains creativity and novelty. We never know for certain how the holon will emerge or into what it will emerge. The higher we move up the evolutionary scale, the greater the novelty. Physics is a more mature science than psychology for example, which is not surprising given that humans contain much more novelty than rocks. Humans possess more creativity than rocks and as a result the study of the human psyche is more vague and difficult to study than the elements of rocks. Humans are more unpredictable than rocks.
- Holons emerge holarchically. Holons are a developmental hierarchy. Each holon emerges from the previous holon with increased levels of complexity. That is to say that the higher holon will incorporate everything of the junior holon and then add its own new complexity or pattern to it. They build on each other. So each holon incorporates and transcends its predecessor. For example, every organism



will incorporate cells but not vice versa. Cells will contain molecules but not vice versa. Unfortunately, hierarchy is a word and concept that has been very unpopular in the last number of years. As Wilber (1995) points out, it has been criticized by social critics, ecofeminists and post-modern poststructuralists amongst others as the major cause of injustice, oppression and domination. These critics of hierarchy called for the end of hierarchies and the instalment of “heterarchy” where governance is established by egalitarianism by all parties. Management science bought into this way of thinking in the 90’s. The big cry was to get rid of hierarchies in organizations and to implement self managed or self directed teams at all costs. Hierarchies were the cause of all the ills within organizations. This call was especially strong from management theorists like Wheatley (1992), Zohar (1997) and Lewin and Regime (1999) who looked to the so called “New Sciences” to justify the death of hierarchies. According to them, mechanistic science was about hierarchies while quantum physics was about relationships and self organized teams. The cure to all the organizations problems was to get rid of hierarchies. The “new sciences” were the justification for this theory. The paradox, however, according to Wilber (1995) is that while these exponents of the web of life and new science paradigm deny hierarchies in any form, the actual science on which they base their theories insist on the necessity of hierarchy. Referring to the work of people like von Bertalanffy (the founder of General Systems Theory), Sheldrake (Morphogenetic fields in biology), Birch and Cobb (ecology), Sperry (brain research) and Habermas (social critical theory), Wilber (1995) argues that hierarchy is the “*basic organizing principle of wholeness.*” Normal hierarchy represents an increase in wholeness and integrative capacity. Therefore it is simply a ranking of orders according to their holistic capacity. What is a whole at one stage becomes a part of a larger whole at the next stage, but it does not work in reverse. An acorn can become an oak tree, but an oak tree cannot become an acorn. Hence hierarchy is asymmetrical. There are therefore developmental stages through which holons emerge, with the more holistic patterns appearing later in development as they have to wait for the emergence of the parts that they will integrate. The other important feature to remember is that within a hierarchal pattern the elements within that level operate by what Wilber (1995) calls “*heterarchy.*” Here no element is more important or dominant; they all contribute more or less equally to the health of the whole level.

Thus, it is possible to see where the idea of self managed teams comes from. They are heterarchies.

The issue of trying to get rid of hierarchies is therefore misguided. The problem is not with hierarchies per se, but with the idea that pathologies can develop within a hierarchy. Pathological hierarchies have led to the condemnation of hierarchies in general. In a pathological hierarchy one holon assumes dominance to the detriment of all. The problem is that the holon assumes that it is the whole and no longer sees itself as simultaneously being a whole and a part. On the other hand in a pathological heterarchy, the holon assumes it is a part, period. It no longer assumes it is a whole. Hence, the cure to the problem is not to substitute heterarchy for hierarchy. Unfortunately, that has been the call by management theorists who have called for the substitution of hierarchies by self-managed teams. A better approach or cure is to address the pathology within the hierarchy, to arrest and to integrate the pathological holon. The cure is to root out the holons that have usurped their power in the overall system by abusing their power of upward or downward causation. The cure is not to substitute hierarchy with heterarchy or vice versa, but to address the pathology in both. Wilber (1995) issues the plea to be aware of theorists who push solely for hierarchy or heterarchy. Instead he calls for “holarchy”, which maintains the balance between normal hierarchy and normal heterarchy.

Jaques and Clement (1997) have come to the same conclusion through their research and work with organizations and Stratified Systems Theory. They make it clear that the problem is not with hierarchies per se but with dysfunctional hierarchies. A hierarchy becomes dysfunctional in an organizational context when the leadership roles within the structure are occupied by individuals who do not have the cognitive complexity to cope with the level of task complexity associated with that level of work. Cognitive complexity is determined by the individual's cognitive power. Where, “*Cognitive power is the potential strength of cognitive processes in a person and is therefore the maximum level of task complexity that someone can handle at any given point in his or her development*” (Jaques and Clement, 1997: 49). From this definition it is clear that cognitive power develops and matures over time. Through their research, Jaques and Clement (1997) found

that the greater the individual's cognitive power, the greater was their capability to cope with a mass of information. Therefore the greater the individual's cognitive power the longer was the individual's time horizon, their ability to work into the future. As a result there is a direct correlation between time horizon and cognitive complexity. In so doing they discovered seven strata or levels of ever increasing task complexity, namely;

- Category B – 1 task complexity (stratum – I): Direct action in immediate situation. The time span would be between one day and three months. This is the kind of task that would be found on the shop and office floor level. People mostly follow the defined rules.
- Category B – 2 task complexity (stratum – II): Diagnostic accumulation. The time span would be between three months and one year. This is the type of task complexity encountered by first line managerial levels. It is the ability to anticipate problems and to develop appropriate solutions and actions.
- Category B – 3 task complexity (stratum – III): Alternative serial plans. The time span would be between one and two years. Due to more complexity, alternative plans are required to be constructed before action is taken. It calls for the ability to choose one of the plans and implement it serially. Corrective action needs to be taken if it is called for.
- Category B – 4 task complexity (stratum – IV): Mutually interactive programmes. The time span would be between two and five years. Complexity increases because a number of programmes are interacting with each other. These have to be planned for, managed, and resources moved around where required. It requires the ability to make tradeoffs between resources in order to progress and achieve goals.
- Category C – 1 task complexity (stratum – V): Situational response. The time span would be between five and ten years. This is the first level of strategic work and is the world of individuals who manage strategic business units in large corporations. It calls for the ability to start working comfortably with paradoxes and the ambiguity inherent in the complexity of the business world. It calls for on the spot judgments while at the same time envisaging the second and third order consequences of those decisions. What-if analysis is a continuous requirement.

- Category C – 2 task complexity (stratum –VI): Diagnostic accumulation. The time span would be between ten and twenty years. Within the context of significant conceptual information and corporate capital expenditure policies, the individual has to decide when and where to make significant changes in major business units. At this level the individual applies pressure to influence the external environment, i.e. negotiating with governments.
- Category C – 3 task complexity (stratum –VII): Alternative Strategies. The time span would be between twenty and fifty years. This is the complexity level of corporate CEO's working on strategic alternatives for global companies. Here the individual starts to operate on a global perspective. Not only do they have to deal with the national economy, but with global economies that effect their business. They have to deal with the complexity of divergent cultures and values and international trade.

According to Jaques and Clement (1997), pathology enters the hierarchy and makes it dysfunctional when an individual occupies a role in which he or she does not possess the required cognitive complexity to match the required task complexity of that stratum of complexity. The problem is not the organizational hierarchy per se but the person occupying the managerial role. The solution is not to condemn the hierarchy but to get rid of or develop the pathological holon within that hierarchy. A call for heterarchy (self-managed teams) will not solve the problem. Jaques and Clement (1997) discovered that cognitive power develops and matures over time. The one level incorporates and builds on the previous level and then transcends it. It is therefore not surprising that Jaques and Cason (1994) believe that managerial hierarchies have been around for 3000 years and that they are unlikely to ever go away.

- Each emergent holon transcends but includes its predecessor(s). Each emerging new holon includes the preceding holons and then adds its own defining patterns to it. In each case it preserves the previous holons but it negates their partiality. It preserves all the basic structures and functions, and drops all the exclusive structure and functions which are replaced by a "*deeper agency that reaches a wider communion.*" In other words all of the lower is taken up into the higher. At the same time however, not all of the higher is in the lower. The holon includes

but transcends its predecessor. Thus Wilber (1995) believes that the transition from one stage of human development to the next involves differentiation and integration. Differentiation is when the self becomes aware that its own identity is distinct from the identity that it attached to a certain stage of development. Having achieved that, the self can proceed to the next stage where it can add to the previous stages to create a new whole. This latter development Wilber (1995) refers to as integration.

- The lower sets the possibilities of the higher; the higher sets the probabilities of the lower. Even though a holon transcends its predecessors, it does not violate the laws of the patterns of the lower levels. It is not determined by the lower holon because it cannot be reduced to the lower level. It cannot, however, ignore the lower level. My body is confined to the laws of gravity and time and space, my mind is not. My mind can explore different times and places, it is not limited to the body. If I fall over the edge of a cliff, however, my mind goes with my body.
- The number of levels which a hierarchy comprises determines whether it is 'shallow' or 'deep'; and the number of any given level is called its 'span'. Very simply this means that the more levels a holon contains, the greater its depth, and the more holons that exist on that level, the greater its span. Hence man has greater depth than plants and rocks. Rocks, however, have more span than humans and plants.
- Each successive level of evolution produces greater depth and less span. The higher a holon is up the evolutionary level; the more precarious its existence. This is because its existence depends on a whole series of other holons that it incorporates. Because the lower holons are components of the higher, the higher level holons cannot be greater in number than the components. It simply means that more depth equals less span. In addition, greater depth means a greater degree of consciousness. Here Wilber is in complete agreement with Schumacher who points out that higher levels of development always implies "more inner", while lower implies more "external and more outer". There are therefore two dimensions at play, a vertical dimension (deep versus shallow) and a horizontal dimension (wide versus narrow). Changes on the horizontal dimension Wilber (1995) refers to as translation, while changes to the vertical dimension are referred to as transformation. This is best explained by referring back to the work of Jaques and

Clement (1997). If for example, an individual at Category B-1 task complexity (stratum – I), learns new rules to apply to the work they do, that would be translation. Their world could have expanded exponentially, but they are still stuck at stratum I. They have grown, but the growth has been due to translation. Transformation would happen if that individual over time eventually grows and develops into Category C – 1 task complexity (stratum – V). The individual would have grown and developed into a whole new world and existence. The reality that a stratum – I individual experiences is totally different to the reality that an individual in stratum – VII would experience. They have total different worldviews which in turn leads to different realities. They could be in the same company and in the same industry but they “live in different worlds.” This happens as a result of transformation, where new worlds of translation disclose themselves. They are not necessarily new worlds located someplace, but exist as deeper perceptions of the world. There are therefore different worldviews associated with different levels of transformation. Jaques and Clement (1997) believe that the objective world is infinite and unknowable. What the individual knows is limited to what they can make sense of in any given moment, which in turn is dependent on a vast array of data available and their ability to make sense of it. In a sense the world the individual inhabits is determined by the data that the individual has managed to transform into meaningful information. The more developed the holon, the more data it can turn into meaningful information. Wilber (1995) points out that evolution is first and foremost a series of transformations that produces more depth and less span than its predecessors.

- Destroy any type of holon, and you will destroy all the holons above it but not the holons below it. There are a number of critics who deny the existence of a higher or lower order of reality. To them it is about making judgments. But as Wilber (1995) points out it is possible to determine the evolutionary sequence of things. The following question will locate the level of the sequence, *“What other type of holons would be destroyed if we destroy this type of holon?”* (Wilber, 1995: 61). So for example, if all the molecules in the universe were destroyed, then all living cells would be destroyed. Atoms, however, would still exist. Only the higher order holons would be destroyed, not the lower order holons, the reason being that the higher order holons depend upon the lower holons as constituent parts. So if all plants were destroyed, life as we know it would cease

to exist, but matter would still exist. From this Wilber (1995) deducts the following. The less depth a holon has, the more fundamental it is because it is a component of so many other holons. The greater the depth of a holon the less fundamental it is because fewer other holons depend on it for their existence.

- Holarchies co-evolve. No holon is isolated, so all holons evolve together. Every thing is a system within a system, a field within a field.
- The micro holon is in relational exchange with the macro holon at all levels of the depth. For Wilber (1995) this is a very important principle. It means that each layer of depth continues to exist in a network of relationship with other holons on the same level. This is best explained by making use of three levels of existence (matter, life and mind). In the *physiosphere* (matter) the physical body exists in relation with other physical bodies. It is dependent for its survival on gravitation, light, water and weather. So for example, the human race reproduces itself physically thorough maintaining the body through food production and consumption. In the *biosphere* (life) humanity reproduces itself biologically through emotional sexual relations. This is usually in families within a social environment. And at the same time its survival depends on the ecosystem. In the *noosphere* (mind) humans reproduce themselves mentally through “*exchanges with cultural and symbolic environments.*” Societies reproduce themselves culturally through exchanging symbols that are embedded in various traditions and norms of that society.
- There is a direction to evolution. The direction is towards increased differentiation, organization, variety and complexity. The evolutionary process develops from the less complex to more complex systems and from lower to higher levels of organization. This means that there are increasing levels of autonomy within the context of larger systems. The autonomy is relative because there are no wholes only whole/parts (holons). Autonomy refers to the holons enduring patterns, its self preservation within a given context. To illustrate the importance of this point it is necessary to quote Wilber at some length, “*But even the entire integrated and autonomous person of psychoanalysis is not really autonomous, because that individual is actually set in contexts of linguistic structures that autonomously determine meaning without the individual even knowing about it (the critique launched by structuralism, archaeology). But linguistic structures aren’t*

*that autonomous, because they exist only in the context of pre-articulated worldviews that use language without language ever registering that fact (the critique by Heidegger, Gebser). But further, worldviews themselves are merely a small component of massive networks and contexts of social practices (in various ways, Marx, Habermas, the later Foucault). And further yet, theorists from Kierkegaard to Schelling to Hegel would insist that these social practices only exist in, and because of, the larger context Spirit. In every one of these cases, the theorist (Freud, Marx, Heidegger, Foucault, Schelling, etc.) tells us something important about the meaning of our existence by situating our existence in a larger context – since meaning and context are in important ways synonymous...Likewise, each discovery of a new and deeper context and meaning is a discovery of a new therapia, a new therapy, namely: we must shift our perspectives, deepen our perception, often against a great deal of resistance, to embrace the deeper and wider context” (1995: 72 – 73). This concept is fundamental to Jaques and Clement’s (1997) Stratified Systems Theory as it is applied to managerial leadership. Even though people live in the same objective world or in the same organization they can actually be living in totally different worlds. Given their level of development, and their ability to manage higher levels of complexity, they actually live in different realities. They believe that the objective world is “infinite and unknowable.” Their argument is that, what anyone can actually know is limited by what they can make sense of at that moment in time. This depends on the vast array of data that is available to the individual and how they make sense of it. They believe that the world that anyone occupies is made up of data that that individual has managed to transform into information that works for them. Every individual therefore determines the size of the world that they live in, through the amount of data that they can turn into meaningful information. As a result they have identified four orders of complexity of information. And like all holons they build on the first order of complexity, integrate it and then transcend it to a higher order of complexity. The four orders of complexity are;*

- First order complexity: Concrete things (Concrete Order): It is the world of things that can be pointed to. There is a tree, there is a person, that is a car, she has blue eyes, etc. The variables are not tangled together, they are clear and unambiguous. People operating at this level can only deal with a small



number of variables. It is usually the world of children and young adults. The juniors in organizations.

- Second order complexity (Symbolic Order): First level of abstraction involving verbal variables. This is where verbal information is used in concepts. We no longer have to point to things; we can use the concepts in normal discourse. Here the variables can be broken down into numerous concrete things and actions, while at the same time being interwoven to form complex patterns. It allows individuals to discuss their work, follow rules, discuss orders with customers, etc.
- Third order complexity (Abstract Conceptual Order): Second level abstraction involving concepts. Here more complex concepts can be used to operate in the conceptual world of the organization. It is the world of the CEO. Here the variables are large in number, interwoven in complex systems and continually changing. It is difficult in this world to go directly from concepts to concrete reality. Here the individual must be able to translate and pull together a concept like the balance sheet with all its accounting assumptions into concrete items like assets, liabilities, expenditure and revenue.
- Fourth order complexity (Universal Order): Third level of abstraction involving universals. This is a world where the level of complexity transcends those that are normally associated with corporate life. Here the concepts develop into universal ideas that address ideologies and philosophy. It works with the problems of whole societies. It is the world of Einstein, Socrates and Plato, etc. From this it is very apparent that even though a second order person lived right next to Einstein, they would actually be living in two different worlds. In terms of Wilber's (1995) thinking, Einstein and his second order neighbour would inhabit the same *physiosphere* (matter) and *biosphere* (life). But in terms of the *noosphere* (mind), they might as well inhabit different planets. Life would have different meanings for both of them.

Readers that are familiar with the work of the German philosopher Hegel (1770 -1831) and his process of dialectics, namely; thesis, antithesis and synthesis, will realize straight away that Wilber (1995) is continuing in this tradition. His model is based on dialectical development.

### **Wilber's developmental process in the individual**

Jaques and Clement's (1997) Stratified Systems Theory unfortunately stops development at the upper levels of the noosphere. The tendency in the West has been to stop at the ultimate levels of mind. Wilber (1995) like Smuts (1973) and Schumacher (1978) before him, extends this thinking into the theosphere (divine domain) as can be seen in Figure 2.3. Wilber (1995) therefore sees evolution as a series of developmental stages from matter, to life, to mind, to soul and ultimately Spirit. Visser (2003) points out that Wilber identified seventeen stages of human development that can be subdivided into three main phases; the prepersonal, the personal and transpersonal as put out in Table 1.

It is important at this point to mention that unlike many psychologists, Wilber believes in the existence of a self in the individual that is critical in the developmental process. The argument that there is no self because the self cannot be seen or perceived does not hold ground for Wilber. It is the self that integrates, coordinates and organizes the "*stream of consciousness*" and in so doing forms the basis of the individual's sense of identity. It is the self that climbs the ladder of development. The ladder of development is a metaphor to illustrate the difference between what Wilber calls the basic structures of consciousness and the transitional or replacement stages of development. Visser (2003) using the metaphor of a ladder, identifies the self with the climber, the rungs of the ladder with the basic structures of consciousness, a higher view from each new rung with the transitional or replacement stages. So with every basic structure of consciousness there is a certain worldview associated with it. As the self develops, the basic structures of consciousness remain in place and present, while the transitional stages will disappear. So for example in development, the body (basic structure of consciousness) remains present throughout development, but the typhon (where the self is identified and limited to the body) is a transitional stage that eventually is replaced.

	17. Ultimate	
	16. High – causal	
	15. Low - causal	<b>Spirit</b>
	14. High – subtle	
<b>Transpersonal</b>	13. Low - subtle	<b>Soul</b>
	12. Centaur	
	11. Biosocial	
	10. Mature ego	
	9. Late ego	
	8. Middle ego	
<b>Personal</b>	7. Early ego	<b>Mind</b>
	6. Membership	
	5. Image body	
	4. Pranic body	
	3. Axial body	
	2. Oeroborous	
<b>Prepersonal</b>	1. Pleroma	<b>Body</b>

Table 1. Wilber's 17 stages of individual development

Source: Adapted from Visser (2003: 82)

Wilber identified more stages than most scientific development models. In his later work he refined these levels down to ten basic structures of consciousness and specified the ages at which these structures tend to emerge. These are listed in Table 2.

10. Causal	Experience of Emptiness	Approx. 35 years
9. Subtle	Experience of Archetypes	Approx. 28 years
8. Vision-logic	Visionary thought	Approx. 21 years
7. Formal-reflexive	Abstract thought	11-15 years
6. Rule/role-thinking	Concrete thought	6-8 years
5. Rep-thinking	Thinking in symbols and concepts	15 mnths. – 2 years
4. Phantasmic	Thinking in simple images	6-12 mths.
3. Emotional-sexual	Life force	1-6 mths.
2. Sensoriperceptual	Sensation and perception	0-3 mths.
1. Physical	The physical organism	prenatal

Table 2. The basic structures and the age at which they begin to emerge during development

Source: Visser (2003: 123)

Needless to say, he based his developmental model on Western developmental psychology and the esoteric traditions of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Eastern Spirituality. Visser (2003) sees Wilber as justifying his choice of the developmental approach as follows. *“Look at any major system of meditation: the Buddha’s detailed stages of dhyana/prajna; Patanjali’s eight-step Yoga Sutras; Lao Tzu’s hierarchic Taoistic contemplation; the encompassing Zen meditation system depicted by the ox-herding stages; the Victorins’ multilevel course of contemplation; the specific and detailed stages taught by St. Theresa and St. John of the Cross; the entire tradition of Kundalini/tantra- yoga, both Hindu and Varajanic. What they all have in common is a view of meditation, not as a relaxation response to sensory derivation or a self-regulation strategy, but as a hierarchical unfolding of successively higher structures of consciousness. To be precise, they see it as a developmental process, composed of specific stages, such that each stage embodies a distinct structure of consciousness...From the Buddha’s stages of dhyana to Kundalini’s chakric stages of sublimation, the whole point was that of stages of development. Truly, these traditionalists were not only the first structuralists; they were the first bona fide developmental psychologists. My point is that in our rush to bridge Eastern and Western psychology, we have looked absolutely everywhere except to developmental/structural psychology. Yet, since the essence of the Eastern traditions is phenomenological-developmental-structural view of the superconscious realms, and*

*since Western psychology has a rather detailed phenomenological-developmental-structural view of the sub – and self-conscious realms, the most immediate and painless bridge would be simply to add them together, just as they are. Such, anyway, was the approach I took in Atman Project” (Visser, 2003: 81).*

Given the nature of the complexity and wide scope of Wilber’s developmental work (19 books); it is not in the scope of this study to go into the developmental stages in great depth. All that is required for this study is a general overview of the developmental processes. Hence the referral to Visser’s (2003) summary of Wilber’s work.

### **The Prepersonal**

According to Visser (2003), Wilber sees the first stages of development being dominated by the emotions and the body. Here consciousness is merged with the physical-emotional reality. Consciousness is asleep. There is no sense of time, self, space or the environment. It is prepersonal because the personality has not developed yet. Unlike many transpersonal theorists Wilber does not see this as a state of transpersonal bliss. Washburn (1995) for example, is of the opinion that this is a blissful state that is lost as the person develops an ego and then the self returns to the pre ego state in the transpersonal stages. In this view the ego is seen as something bad, it is the enemy of the “spiritual.” In his earlier work Wilber agreed with this view. In his later work he stressed that it was an error in thinking and referred to it as the Pre/Trans Fallacy. Because Wilber’s (1995) model is a hierarchical developmental model, his argument is that an infant cannot be more spiritual than an adult. In reality the infant is less spiritual than the adult because it is merged with concrete reality, in that infants are totally ignorant of the mental world and the realms beyond that. Therefore Wilber (1995) does not see the transition from infant to adult as a fall from paradise, but rather as a difficult emergence from a state of unconsciousness. It is a developmental way forward, not a return to a previous state. In Wilber’s (1995) thinking the ego is not an enemy of the spiritual, but a stepping stone to the spiritual. The implication of this is enormous. How often does one not hear consultants, coaches and psychologists speak about the fact that the real problems in organizations are people whose egos are too big? The solution according to them is to “get rid” of those

people's egos, thereby, effectively asking the individuals to repress their egos and their development. In Wilber's (1995) thinking, the problem is not that people's egos are too big, but that they are in fact too small. The solution is not to "get rid" of the egos but to grow them as big and as fast as possible. It is only when a healthy developed ego reaches its limitations that it can in fact transcend to the next stage of development

Starting with the body, the child goes on to develop an ego / personality and once those are well established it moves on to the transpersonal realms of consciousness. As the child develops, it increasingly identifies with its body as the boundary between the self and the outside world. The concept of the self is defined by the boundaries of the body. So the self is very much a body bound self.

At some point in its development the child will enter the 'membership self' stage. Here the child becomes aware that it is part of a larger social system or environment. It is the stage when the child starts to talk and communicate with important others in its environment. It is at this point that the culture into which the child has been born into starts to exert an influence. The child cannot think logically. Aided by language the child now starts to develop concepts of time and can refer to past, present and future. The child starts to be able to control its bodily impulses. As the child starts to explore the world of language it emerges out of the physiosphere and starts to become a personality.

### **The Personal**

The transition from the prepersonal to the personal stage is really moving from a mainly physical way of functioning to a more mental way of functioning. The child now has an image of itself and is capable of reflecting on that self image. Whereas the child previously identified itself with the body, the identification is now with a mental self. It is in these stages that the id, the ego, and the superego come into existence. An important development in this stage is the ability of the mental self to transcend the physical, but at the same time possessing the ability to suppress the physical. Visser (2003) points out that in Wilber's opinion, this phenomena is at the core of an important imbalance in the psyche of the modern Western individual. As a mental self

(ego) the modern Western individual has virtually lost all contact with the body and its functions, hence the Western ideal to dominate the body and nature.

Towards the end of the mental stages the ego matures and develops the ability to differentiate itself from the ego. For the first time the self can separate itself from the body and the ego. It is now in a position to integrate the body and the ego. It is this stage that Wilber (1995) refers to as the Centaur Stage, the mythological figure that is half man and half animal. The body and the ego are integrated to form a higher union and this stage is characterized by the emergence of the existential crises. Here the individual becomes concerned with meaning, self-realisation and self-autonomy. The phenomenological concept of intention becomes very important in that it prompts the individual to ascribe meaning to their lives in the context of a personal vision. Life does not necessarily have meaning but the individual can ascribe various meanings to it. The individual starts to realize that he or she is not a victim of circumstances but has the freedom to choose a response to various stimuli, which brings with it a sense of personal freedom. Although Wilber places the existential phase with the personal, it is the gateway to the transpersonal. In Western psychology it is generally believed that this is the pinnacle of human development, the integrated, autonomous and rational individual is the end point of human development. Even Jaques and Clement's (1997) Stratified Systems Theory is limited to this band of human development. Their four orders of complexity clearly limit the concept of the self to Wilber's personal levels of development.

### **The Transpersonal**

Drawing on the works of a number of mystics, Wilber (1995) believes that the self continues to develop into the spiritual realms. In the first stages of the subtle level the self begins to transcend the personal, it goes beyond the identity of language, thoughts and the ego. The self realizes that it is more than just the body and the mind. Eventually the self will enter the higher stages where God and the self are one. It is at these levels of development that the self experiences the dissolution of the subject-object duality. All religious traditions speak of this phenomenological experience. At the Ultimate stage of development there is no subject-object duality, all that is left is consciousness.

In the East this concept is not strange. In the West this kind of thinking has become more tolerated due to globalization. It is seen as Eastern and especially a Buddhist way of seeing the world. Yet even in the West and in South Africa where we have a very strong Islamic, Judaic, Hindu and Christian religious influence, this kind of thinking and experience is not strange or unique. In Islam one only has to refer to the works of Rumi, in Judaism to Martin Buber, in Hinduism to Sri Aurobindo, in Christianity to St Theresa of Avila, St John of the Cross, Meister Eckhard, Fathers Thomas Keating, Bede Griffith, Thomas Merton, Anthony De Mello, and Evelyn Underhill to realize that this is the everyday experience of ordinary human beings. It is the pinnacle of human development. Roberts (1993) gives a detailed phenomenological account of her experience of arriving at a state of no-self in her book *The Experience of No-Self*. In her conclusion she writes that the journey to the state no-self can take on two views. The first is that it is a supernatural event that constitutes a relentless journey into God. The second is that it is the final process of our natural life-span where self-consciousness is finally relinquished and we become mature human beings. Either way, the individual is prepared for a new existence.

If that is true, then it is the author's contention that current executive development models have neglected the transpersonal realm of human development. And it is precisely these realms that Smuts (1973) and Schumacher (1978) believed were essential for leadership development. It is only in the transpersonal realms that an executive can truly start to appreciate and experience Greenleaf's (1991) concept of Servant Leadership and its implications for organizations and societies. Over the years a number of management theorists have tried to expound the virtues of Servant Leadership. What people forget, however, is that Greenleaf (1991) was a dedicated Quaker, a man who dedicated his life to developing the transpersonal realms of life. As a Quaker, meditation was an integral part of his life. More over, he wrote his essays on Servant Leadership at a very mature stage in his life. If Wilber's (1995) model is to be taken seriously, then it is the author's contention that Servant Leadership is a natural development in the transpersonal levels of development. It is the leadership worldview associated with the transpersonal stages of development. Something as powerful as Servant Leadership does not make sense to an individual whose identity is still on the lower personal levels of development. The same can be



said for the leadership work of Koestenbaum (1991). That kind of leadership thinking and acting only comes into existence in the transpersonal levels of development. Yet executive development programmes have tended to avoid or simply deny these higher levels of development. One of the reasons could be the populist war against hierarchies. Instead of addressing the problem of pathological hierarchies, the tendency has been to deny hierarchies, including developmental hierarchies' (*qualitatively ranked levels*) altogether. The call has been for heterarchy (*mutually linked dimensions*) instead of honouring and working with developmental hierarchies. It is therefore not surprising that theorists who support developmental hierarchies are not very popular, and that includes Wilber (1995) and Jaques and Clement (1997). Wilber (1995) however, emphasizes the need for both, hierarchy and heterarchy, as the two combined make up a holarchy. It is not the one at the expense of the other, you need both.

This simplified developmental process is beautifully illustrated in Figure 2.4. Starting from the top, everything to the left of the diagonal vertical line is seen as the self, and everything to right is seen as non-self. It is a developmental process in which the identity of the self continually expands until it ends in Unity Consciousness. At each level of development, however, different pathologies can develop. On the left hand side of Figure 1 Wilber (2001) has listed the various therapies or spiritual interventions that are appropriate for that level of development.

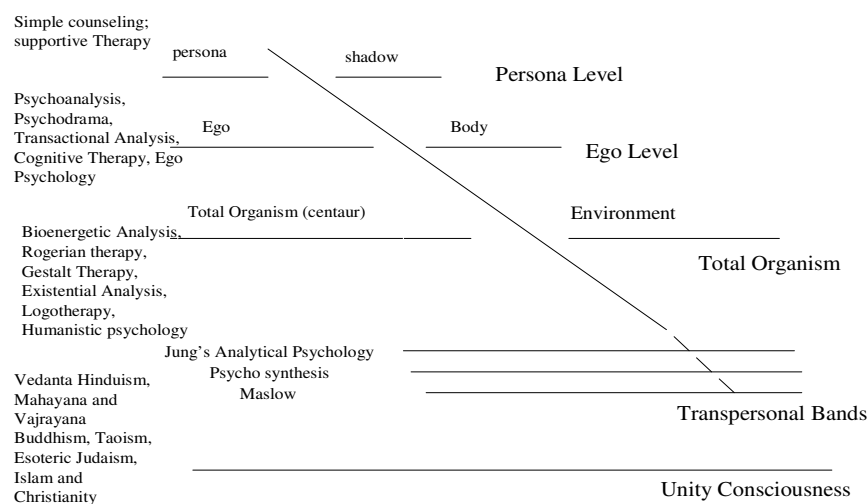


Figure 1. Spectrum of Consciousness

Source: Wilber (2001:14)

So for example, in the early stages of development the self is identified with the persona and the shadow is seen as not being part of the self. This is the first level of integration that needs to take place. Supportive Therapy or Simple Counselling can be used to deal with this level of integration. If integration is successful, the identify of the self is expanded to the ego. Now the self is identified with the ego, but the body is not seen as part of the self. At this level Psychoanalysis, Transactional Analysis or Ego Psychology, for example, can be effective to deal with the integration struggle or any pathology that can arise at that level of development. The centaur comes into being when the ego and the body have successfully been integrated. The self as identity now ends with the person's skin. The skin is the boundary of the self. Everything beyond that is again seen as non self or not part of the self. If this integration process continues and is successful the individual will eventually reach a state of Unity Consciousness. It is the state of existence that the mystics all speak about, the final realization that everything is one. Here the object – subject duality falls away permanently. Mental suffering ceases to exist.

Visser (2003) believes that Wilber's genius has been his ability to map out these developmental levels, to identify the pathologies that can be encountered at the various

levels and the various psychological and spiritual therapies that can treat the pathologies. A summary of which is presented in Table 3. In so doing, he has shown how Western and Eastern psychological approaches can complement and build on each other.

Stage	Pathology	Therapy
10. Ultimate	Ultimate pathology	Nondual mysticism
9. Causal	Causal pathology	Formless mysticism
8. Subtle	Subtle pathology	Theist mysticism
7. Psychic	Psychic pathology	Nature mysticism
6. Vision-logic	Existential crises	Existential therapy
5. Formal-reflexive	Identity crises	Introspection
4. Rule/role thinking	Script-pathology	Script-analysis
3. Rep-thinking	Neuroses	Insight therapy
2. Phantasmic	Narcissism / borderline	Structuring therapy
1. sensory	Psychosis	Relaxing therapy

Table 3. The spectrum of stages, pathologies, and methods of treatment

Source: Visser, (2003:144)

As a result, Wilber (2001) argues that all psychological and spiritual therapies are relevant, the one is not better than the other. They each have their place. The question is not which school of therapy is the best, but rather which therapy is relevant for that level of development or that level of pathology? Hence it is no good trying to treat a patient with an existential crises using cognitive behavioural therapy. In this case, Logo therapy would be more appropriate. In the same way, traditional Western Psychology is irrelevant at the spiritual levels. Wilber's (2001) argument is backed up very eloquently by Roberts, *"In keeping with this admission of a gentle man who said he was terrified at the thought of losing the self. What he had obviously failed to realize was that the terror and dread he felt is self, and that without the self there can be no such feelings. In fact, a sure sign self is gone is the absence of these affective symptoms...But this is why the histories of those who have truly gone beyond self will never be found in psychiatric literature. With no problems in the affective domain, few people would be in need of a psychiatrist or analyst, indeed, without an affective*

*system, or without a self, this whole school of thought would be out of business”* (1993:180).

Visser (2003) points out that Wilber’s plea is for the conventional psychological schools to learn from the contemplative schools, especially with regard to the higher levels of development. But at the same time he pleads for the contemplative schools to drop their apparent self-sufficiency and open themselves up to vital and important lessons that they can learn from psychology and psychiatry. These schools are more effective and efficient at dealing with the pathologies associated with the lower levels of development. The beauty of Wilber’s model is that it gives legitimacy to all the various schools, both psychological and spiritual, East and West. Every school contains a partial truth. No one school of thought contains the whole truth. Once that is recognized, it is easy to integrate all of the various schools and recognize the value that they each add to the developmental process.

### **Development is not a simple linear progression**

According to Wilber (2000), the human being is a very complex organism. Rather than seeing development as a simple linear progression where the one level builds on the other, i.e. the individual first has to be well developed cognitively before they can develop spiritually, development should be seen as taking place in relatively independent lines or streams. Once again this is best illustrated with the aid of Figure 2.

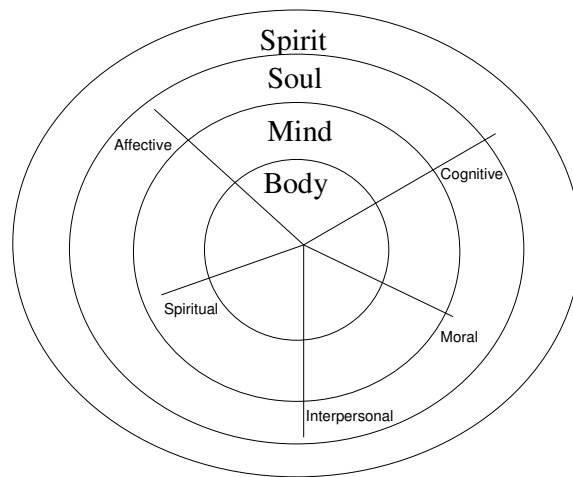


Figure 2. The Integral Psychograph as a holarchy

Source: Wilber 2000:31

The point is that these lines are “relatively independent” in that they can develop independently of each other. They can develop on different time scales, at different rates and have a different dynamic. So it is very possible for an individual to be highly developed in some lines, low in others and medium in others. Wilber’s (2000) argument is that the overall development, what he calls the sum total of all the different lines, does not show any linear or sequential development whatsoever. However, he points out that research continues to find that the “independent” developmental lines do tend to unfold in a sequential, holarchical fashion. So the higher stages of each developmental line tend to build on and incorporate the earlier stages. Furthermore, no stage can be skipped because the one builds on the other. In addition he argues that these stages emerge in an order that cannot be altered by social reinforcement or conditioning. Wilber (2000) points out that this conclusion is not based on theoretical speculation, but is based on “*massive experimental data*”. According to Wilber (2000) there is general consensus that no matter how different the developmental lines are, they tend to unfold holarchically. They develop through a physical / preconvention (prepersonal) stage, a conventional (prepersonal) stage and a more abstract postconventional (personal) stage and finally into higher post-

postconventional (transpersonal) stages as shown in Figure 2.5. It is a complex web of development and there are no guarantees. Pathology can enter into and at any stage of these developmental lines. Hence Wilber often talks of “regression in the service of transcendence”, sometimes we have to regress to address or heal lower order pathologies in order to move forward. The point is not to return to the level where the pathology has occurred, permanently. The issue is to address the pathology and get back to the higher level of development. If those pathologies are not addressed it can halt the developmental process and/or hinder the integration processes.

Be that as it may, the point is that Wilber’s model is not a simple linear developmental model. It is a complex web of developmental lines or streams that are relatively independent. A very good example of this can be found in the Christian tradition. One of the literary classics within Christianity is a book called *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence, written over 300 years ago. By all accounts Brother Lawrence was a very simple man. His application to join a monastery was continually refused on the grounds that he did not have the intellectual capacity. Based on his sheer persistence he was eventually allowed into the monastery, although he was never allowed to join the order. His job in the monastery was to wash the pots in the kitchen as that was all he was intellectually capable of. Yet Brother Lawrence had a very highly developed “spirituality”. In his simplicity, he developed a method to practise the presence of God, which led to him being a very spiritual man. So much so, that in his later years he became a spiritual director to many priests, monks and bishops. These men, no doubt, were intellectually far superior to Brother Lawrence, yet in things spiritual he was far more advanced than they were.

### **Individual and cultural progress**

Not only does the individual develop through various stages, cultures as a whole evolve through similar developmental processes. Visser (2003) points out that in this regard Wilber’s earlier thinking was very influenced by the work of Jean Gebser and later by Jurgen Habermas. Wilber found that his stages of individual development corresponded with the stages of cultural development outlined by Gebser. Gebser and Wilber were of the opinion that society as a whole has evolved through four stages; the archaic, magical, mythical and mental. The first stage, Wilber called the archaic-

uroboric stage/phase. This was the day of primeval man. In this phase man existed in a state of consciousness that was more animal than human. It was concerned with pure survival and the search for food.

The second phase, the magical-typhonic, was characterized by a physical-emotional level of consciousness. It was in this phase of development that individuals started to become aware of their mortality. In an attempt to ward off death, magic rituals were devised. At the same time the concept of time started to expand beyond the immediate present, but not much more than that. The most highly-developed individuals at this time were the shamans who possessed authentic paranormal powers. We know more about this culture because they left traces of tools, settlements and cave paintings.

With the mythical membership phase, about 100 thousand years ago, humanity advanced again. Certain social organizations were called for as a result of increased populations. It is at this time that we see the development of agriculture. Visser (2003) points out that according to Wilber, the development of agriculture was of great importance to the development of human consciousness. At this point humanity became aware of the cyclical nature of time, because they were dependent on the rhythm of the seasons. Hence, the individual had to learn to relate to time in a different way, they had to learn to wait and manage their crops. It was at this time that language and writing, in order to record the crops, came into being. People started to live together in groups. With groups living together and the ability to communicate via language, cultures started to flourish. To perpetuate the culture they told stories (hence the term mythic). With this development came an awareness of politics, kingship and its shadow side, namely wars.

The fourth phase comes into being around the second millennium B.C. and is known as the mental-egoic phase. It is at this point in the evolution of humanity that ego develops both in the individual and within the culture. By transcending the world of magic and myth, mental development starts to excel. As a result time now has a past, present and future. Man now has a sense of history and modern man has arrived.

In his book, *Sex, Ecology, Spirituality*, Wilber (1995) developed his thinking on this even further. This time he incorporated the work of Habermas. Both believe that there

is a parallel between the development of the individual and the evolution of humanity as a whole, but not in terms of every last detail. Both incorporate the ideas of Piaget. Wilber, like Habermas now divides human history into three main periods as summarized in Table 4.

<b>Nature of the culture</b>	<b>Level of identity</b>	<b>Types of thinking</b>	<b>Stages of the Self</b>
3. Rational	Ego	Formop	World centric
2. Mythic	Group	Conop	Socio/ethnocentric
1. Magic	Body	Preop	Bio/egocentric
Gebser	Habermas	Piaget	Wilber

Table 4. The three stages of individual and cultural development.

Source: Visser (2003:187)

Visser (2003) points out that according to Wilber; in the first stage the culture is magical. Individual identity is primarily associated with the body, thinking is based on images (pre-operational) and the basic orientation is bio centric or egocentric. In the second stage the culture is mythical. Self identity is associated with the group to which it belongs (the role fulfilled in society), thinking is based on concrete concepts (concrete-operational) and the basic orientation is socio and ethnocentric. The final stage is the current level of cultural development. The culture is rational. Here the individual becomes an autonomous individual and ego. Thinking at this stage of development is based on abstract concepts (formal-operational) and the orientation is world centric. Here Wilber's thinking corresponds to that of Jaques and Clement (1997), where his upper level corresponds to the latter's Fourth Order Complexity, which is the third level of abstraction involving universals and the task complexity is stratum VII. This is a world where the level of complexity transcends those that are normally associated with corporate life. Here the concepts develop into universal ideas that address ideologies and philosophy. It works with the problems of whole societies and the time span would be between twenty and fifty years. It is the world of Einstein, Socrates and Plato. This is the complexity level of corporate CEO's working on strategic alternatives for global companies. Here the individual starts to operate on a global perspective. Not only do they have to deal with the national economy, but with global economies that effect their business. They have to deal with the complexity of divergent cultures and values and international trade.



The rational level is the upper level of our current cultural development. It is the level of development that is attained by the average person in the population. Wilber, is however of the opinion that there are levels beyond the rational. Visser (2003) points out that the absence of scientific evidence of transpersonal stages in culture is due to the relative rarity of these stages in our culture. Yet Wilber (1995) points to the mystics to describe the transpersonal levels, these are people who were not just ahead of their own times but are also ahead of our times. These are the people who have the most evolved levels of consciousness, levels of consciousness to which society as a whole still needs to evolve. These transpersonal bands he divides into nature mysticism, theistic mysticism, monistic mysticism and nondualistic mysticism. It is not within the scope of this study to go into detail on these stages, suffice to mention them. The point is that our history shows that there have always been those individuals who have been more highly developed than the general population. They reach these stages of development long before society as a whole does for example Buddha and Christ. The tendency has always been for society to try and silence them or to pull them “back” towards the average or median. Just because the median of the population does not experience these levels of development, does not mean that they do not exist. In the corporate world a similar dynamic is at work, in that it is not uncommon to find individuals whose development or thinking is way ahead of the average level of development within the company. These individuals are usually under enormous pressure to fit in, conform or to leave the company. Sadly, they often have no choice but to leave the company, because the company does not support their growth and development. This dilemma seems to be universal. Another example of where this happens is within monastic orders and the church, the very institutions that should be fostering growth and development in people. Referring to the work of Thomas Merton, Pennington (1997) points out that initially the restrictions of communal service and obedience in the church does liberate the individual from attachments and the self-will. But in trying to channel the energies of the Spirit the church can frustrate and stifle human growth and development beyond the median level. In so doing it tolerates “safe” moderate growth and in turn blesses the lack of growth and development. The church therefore tolerates those who do not grow.

Again this thinking is not unique. Beck and Cowan (2000) expressed similar views and stages of development in their book, *Spiral Dynamics. Mastering values, leadership and change*. In fact in his book *Integral Psychology* Wilber (2000) shows how their thinking can be integrated with his, for the purposes of a more integrated and holistic view of development, however, Wilber presents a better framework. Beck and Cowan (2000) do not seem to know the difference between mystical and mythical. They tend to use the terms synonymously, thereby casting doubt on their ability to understand the transpersonal bands. Like Jaques and Clement (1997) they do a brilliant job at mapping out the personal levels for the individual and culture. It is in the transpersonal realm, that they are found wanting and Wilber stands out in the clarity of his thinking. Hence Wilber's model appears more robust and more integrative.

### **A more integrative approach**

Wilber's (1995) model gives us an integrated model of human and cultural development that is open ended. He points out that human growth and development is a never ending process with limitless potential. At the same time, however, there are no guarantees that every individual will experience healthy growth. At any stage of the developmental process, individual or cultural, pathologies can develop. These pathologies can be treated and overcome or they can halt or destroy development completely. The beauty of his model is that unlike so many new age fads out there, he does not call for the destruction of old sciences or new sciences. Instead he shows that every discipline contains a partial truth. No science or discipline contains the ultimate truth. Empirical science and phenomenological science both are valid and we need to honour both. It is not the one or the other, or this or that, it is all of it. As Wilber expresses it in the forward to Visser's (2002) book, integral means to be more inclusive and embracing, it is an attempt to include as many perspectives, methodologies and styles as possible. Integral approaches are meta-models in that they try to draw together a number of existing disconnected paradigms into more enriching perspective.

At the same time, however, Wilber cautions us to remember that any theory is just that - a mere theory. The point is not to know the theory intellectually but to live the

reality and to experience it. Not only is Wilber a gifted theorist, he actually lives what he preaches. The beauty of his integrated approach is that it is based on experience and sound empirical and phenomenological research. It is not mere philosophical speculation.

Not only does Wilber provide us with a well developed theory on human development, but he also gives the executive an integrated framework in which to think. The problem in many organizations is that people do not tend to see how different interventions support each other. Instead, all interventions are seen as the latest management fad that will come and go. What is missing is to see how the various interventions can actually support each other or build on each other. Once the organization is seen from this point of view, it immediately becomes apparent that any intervention is relevant but partial. No intervention or leadership model or methodology is a silver bullet. Not one contains the ultimate truth; they all contain a partial truth that they contribute to the ultimate truth. Figure 3 sets out some of the more well-known interventions that have been implemented in organizations and shows where they fit into Wilber's integral model.

	<b>Interior</b>			<b>Exterior</b>		
	<b>Individual Experience &amp; Consciousness</b>			<b>Body &amp; Behaviour</b>		
Servant Leadership		Jaques' Leadership Competencies		Kolb's Learning Styles	Jaques' Leadership Competencies	<b>Individual</b>
	Covey's Principle Leadership and Seven Habits	Koestenbaum's Leadership model		Individual Competencies	Participative redesign	
Vision Quests		Open Space Technology		Balanced Scorecard	Future Search Methodologies	Assessment Centers
CRM	<b>Group Membership</b>			<b>Social System</b>		
Diversity Training	Tavisock Psychodynamics	Spiral Dynamics		Systems Thinking	EVA Stratified Systems thinking	Real Time Strategic Change CRM
Appreciative Inquiry	Dialogue Narrative	Future Search Methodologies		Quality Assurance	Business Process Reengineering	<b>Communal</b>
Organizational Culture	Real Time Strategic Change	Balanced Scorecard		Balanced Scorecard	Kaizen Future Search Methodologies	<b>or Collective</b>
		Open Space Technology		JIT	Participative redesign	Organizational Design

Figure 3. Organizational Interventions in Wilber's Model

Source: Adapted from Wilber (1996: 71)

The important thing to remember is that all four quadrants are necessary for an integral theory of consciousness. The problem in business is that reality is often reduced to the two right hand quadrants, the so called “hard stuff.” The left-hand quadrants are often ignored or at the very least tolerated as the “soft stuff.” Yet everybody knows that this is the most difficult domain to work with. Wilber’s call is for the executive to work with all four quadrants.

Visser (2003) believes that one of the main advantages of the Four Quadrant Model is that it enables the identification of all kinds of precise correlations within the various quadrants. As an example, when an individual is capable of abstract thought (Upper-Left quadrant) due to the fact that the neocortex has developed in the brain (Upper-Right quadrant) and is a prerequisite for thought, the individual can create a culture (Lower-Left quadrant) that is rational. And that rational culture can in turn develop industrialized economies (Lower-Right quadrant).

In the same way it is going to be very difficult for Servant Leaders to evolve in a company if the individuals and the company as a whole are not at that level of consciousness. At the same time a company will find it very difficult to come up with a strategy that addresses strategic issues that can span ten to twenty years when the most highly developed individuals in the organization can only work four years into the future. These are highly complex problems that have to be addressed in an integrated way. Wilber’s (1995) Integrative Model therefore provides the framework for integrated growth and development.

## Appendix 2

### **LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY**

#### **Instructions**

This questionnaire is designed to explore the way in which you prefer to learn. There are nine sets of four phrases overleaf. Rank-order the words in each set by assigning

4. to the phrase that best characterises your learning style
3. to the phrase that next best characterises your learning style
2. to the next most characteristic phrase
1. to the phrase that is least characteristic of you as a learner

Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers - all the choices are equally acceptable. The aim of the inventory is to describe how you learn, not to evaluate your learning ability.

**Be sure to assign a different rank number to each of the four words in each set; do not make ties.**

## The Learning Styles Inventory (LSI)

- |    |                      |  |
|----|----------------------|--|
| 1A | <input type="text"/> | I like to take my time before acting.                |
| 1B | <input type="text"/> | I like to get involved.                              |
| 1C | <input type="text"/> | I am particular about what I like.                   |
| 1D | <input type="text"/> | I like things to be useful.                          |
|    |                      |  |
| 2A | <input type="text"/> | I like to analyse things and break them down.        |
| 2B | <input type="text"/> | I like to try things out.                            |
| 2C | <input type="text"/> | I am open to new experiences.                        |
| 2D | <input type="text"/> | I like to look at all sides of issues.               |
|    |                      |  |
| 3A | <input type="text"/> | I like to think about things.                        |
| 3B | <input type="text"/> | I like to be doing things.                           |
| 3C | <input type="text"/> | I like to follow my feelings.                        |
| 3D | <input type="text"/> | I like to watch.                                     |
|    |                      |  |
| 4A | <input type="text"/> | I accept people and situations the way they are.     |
| 4B | <input type="text"/> | I like to evaluate.                                  |
| 4C | <input type="text"/> | I like to be aware of what is around me.             |
| 4D | <input type="text"/> | I like to take risks.                                |
|    |                      |  |
| 5A | <input type="text"/> | I have gut feelings and hunches.                     |
| 5B | <input type="text"/> | I have lots of questions.                            |
| 5C | <input type="text"/> | I am logical.  |
| 5D | <input type="text"/> | I am hard working and get things done.               |
|    |                      |  |
| 6A | <input type="text"/> | I like to be active.                                 |
| 6B | <input type="text"/> | I like to observe.                                   |
| 6C | <input type="text"/> | I like ideas and theories.                           |
| 6D | <input type="text"/> | I like concrete things: things that I can see, feel. |
|    |                      |  |
| 7A | <input type="text"/> | I tend to think about the future.                    |
| 7B | <input type="text"/> | I prefer learning in the “here and now”.             |
| 7C | <input type="text"/> | I like to see results from my work.                  |
| 7D | <input type="text"/> | I like to consider and reflect about things.         |
|    |                      |  |
| 8A | <input type="text"/> | I rely on my feelings.                               |
| 8B | <input type="text"/> | I rely on my own observations.                       |
| 8C | <input type="text"/> | I rely on my own ideas.                              |
| 8D | <input type="text"/> | I have to try things out for myself.                 |
|    |                      |  |
| 9A | <input type="text"/> | I tend to reason things out                          |
| 9B | <input type="text"/> | I am quiet and reserved                              |
| 9C | <input type="text"/> | I am responsible about things                        |
| 9D | <input type="text"/> | I am energetic and enthusiastic                      |

## LEARNING STYLES INVENTORY

### Instructions

The four phrases in each set in the Learning Styles Inventory correspond to the four learning style scales:

- Concrete Experience (CE)
- Reflective Observation (RO)
- Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)
- Active Experimentation (AE)

To compute your scale scores, write your rank numbers in the boxes below **for the designated items only**. Compute your scale scores by adding the rank numbers for each set of boxes.

CE	
1B	
2C	
3C	
4A	
8A	
9D	

CE =	
------	--

RO	
1A	
2D	
3D	
6B	
8B	
9B	

RO =	
------	--

AC	
2A	
3A	
4B	
6C	
8C	
9A	

AC =	
------	--

AE	
2B	
3B	
6A	
7C	
8D	
9C	

AE =	
------	--

To compute the two combination scores, subtract **CE** from **AC** and subtract **RO** from **AE**. Preserve negative signs if they appear.

AC - CE 

AC

 - 

CE

 = \_\_\_\_\_

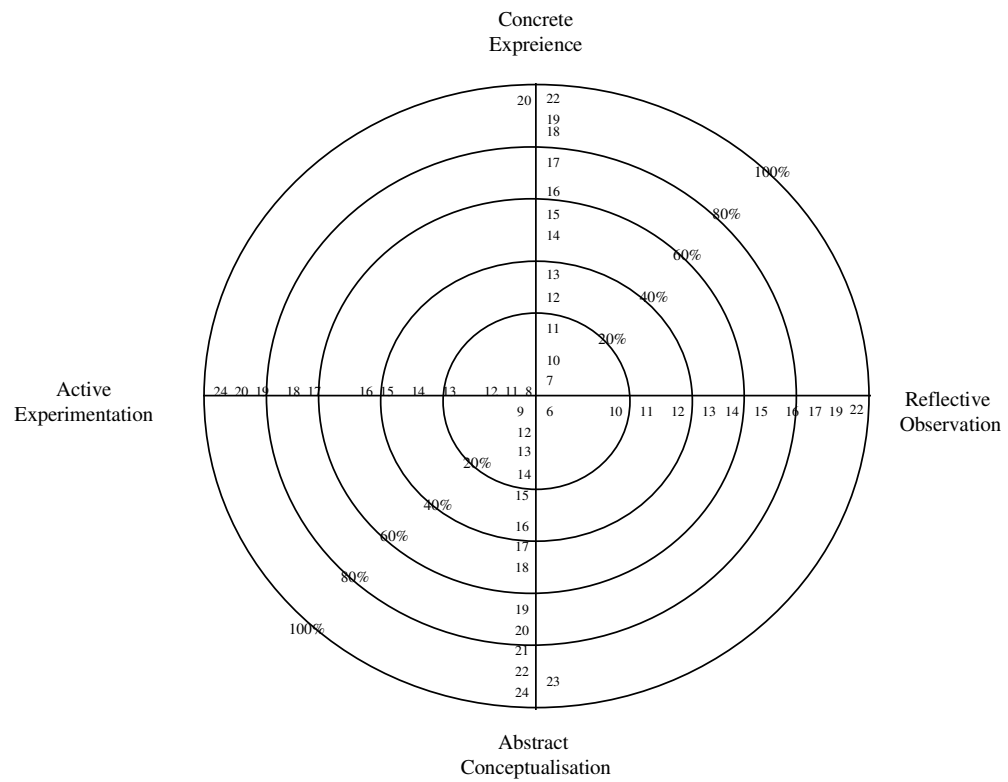
AE - RO 

AE

 - 

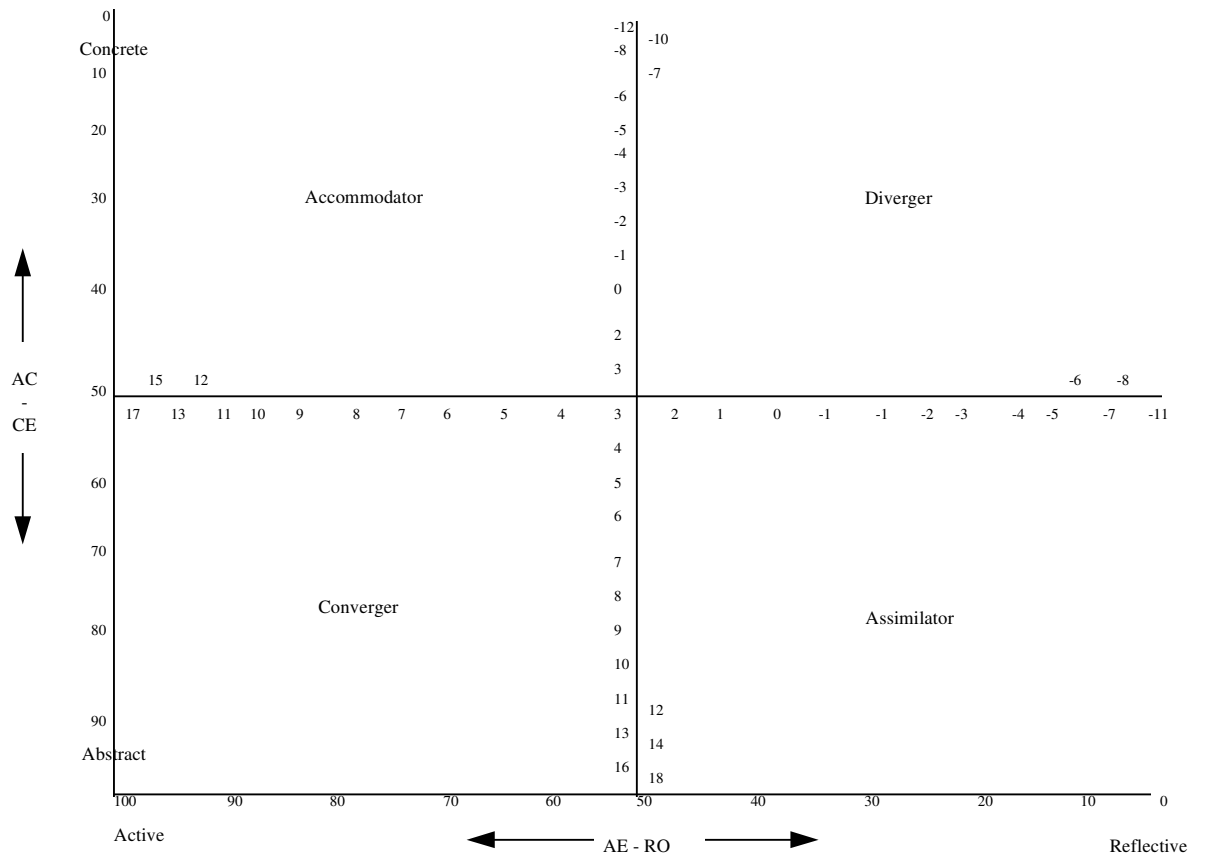
RO

 = \_\_\_\_\_



The Learning Style Profile Norms for the Learning Style Inventory (copyright 1976 by David A. Kolb)





Learning Style Type Grid (copyright 1976 by David A. Kolb)

### Interpreting Your Scores

The Learning Style Inventory (LSI) is a simple self-description test designed to measure your strengths and weaknesses as a learner in the four stages of the learning process. Effective learners rely on four different learning modes:

- **Concrete Experience (CE)**
- **Reflective Observation (RO)**
- **Abstract Conceptualisation (AC)**
- **Active Experimentation (AE)**

That is, they must be able to involve themselves fully, openly, and without bias in new experiences (CE), they must be able to reflect on and observe these experiences from many perspectives (RO), they must be able to create concepts that integrate their observations into logically sound theories (AC) and they must be able to use these theories to make decisions and solve problems (AE).

The LSI is designed to assess the relative importance to you of each of the four learning modes so that you can get some indication of which modes you tend to emphasise. It does so by asking you to rank-order sets of four phrases that describe these different abilities. Combination scores indicate the extent to which you emphasise abstractness over concreteness (AC-CE) and the extent to which you emphasise active experiment over reflection (AE-RO).

One way to understand the meaning of your scores on the LSI is to compare them with the scores of others. The “Target” figure gives norms on the four basic scales (CE, RO, AC, AE) for 1,933 adults ranging from 18 to 60 years of age. About two thirds of the group are men and the group as a whole is highly educated (two-thirds have college degrees or higher). A wide range of occupations and educational backgrounds are represented, including teachers, counsellors, engineers, sales-people, managers, doctors and lawyers.

The raw scores for each of the four basic scales are listed on the crossed lines of the target. The concentric circles on the target represent percentile scores for the normative group. For example, if your raw score on **concrete experience** was 15, you scored higher on this scale than about 55 percent of the people in the normative group. If your CE score was 22 or higher, you scored higher than 99 percent of the normative group. The shape of your profile indicates which of the four basic modes you tend to emphasise and which are less emphasised in comparison to the normative group.

No individual mode is better or worse than any other. Even a totally balanced profile is not necessarily best. The key to effective learning is being competent in each mode when it is appropriate. A high score on one mode may mean a tendency to over-emphasise that aspect of the learning process at the expense of others. A low score on a mode may indicate a tendency to avoid that aspect of the learning process.

A high score on **concrete experience** represents a receptive, experience-based approach to learning that relies heavily on feeling-based judgments. High CE individuals tend to be empathetic and "people-oriented". They generally find theoretical approaches to be unhelpful and prefer to treat each situation as a unique case. They learn best from specific examples in which they can become involved. Individuals who emphasise **concrete experience** tend to be oriented more toward peers and less toward authority in their approach to learning and benefit most from feedback and discussion with fellow CE learners.

A high score on **abstract conceptualisation** indicates an analytical, conceptual approach to learning that relies heavily on logical thinking and rational evaluation. High AC individuals tend to be oriented more toward things and symbols and less toward other people. They learn in impersonal, authority-directed learning situations that emphasise theory and systematic analysis. They are often frustrated by, and benefit little from, unstructured "discovery" learning approaches such as exercises and simulations.

A high score on **active experimentation** indicates an active, "doing" orientation to learning that relies heavily on experimentation. High AE individuals learn best when they can engage in such things as projects, homework or small group discussions. They dislike passive learning situations such as lectures. These individuals tend to be extroverts.

A high score on **reflective observation** indicates a tentative, impartial and reflective approach to learning. High RO individuals rely heavily on careful observation in making judgments and prefer learning situations such as lectures that allow them to take the role of impartial objective observers. These individuals tend to be introverts.

It should be emphasised that the LSI does not measure your learning style with 100% accuracy. Rather it is an indication of how you see yourself as a learner. You will need data from other sources if you wish to pinpoint your learning style more exactly (eg how you make decisions on the job, how others see you and what kinds of problems you solve best).

### Identifying Your Learning Styles

It is unlikely that your learning style will be described accurately by just one of the four preceding paragraphs. This is because each person's learning style is a combination of the four basic learning modes. It is therefore more meaningful to describe your learning style by a single data point that combines your scores on the four basic modes. This is accomplished by using the two combination scores, AC-CE and AE-RO. These scales indicate the degree to which you emphasise abstractness over concreteness and action over reflection, respectively.

The grid has the raw scores for these two scales on the crossed lines (AC-CE on the vertical and AE-RO on the horizontal) and percentile scores based on the normative group on the sides. By marking your raw scores on the two lines and plotting their point of interception, you can find which of the four learning style quadrants you fall into. These four quadrants, labelled **accommodator**, **diverger**, **converser** and **assimilator**, represent the four dominant learning styles. If your AC-CE score were -4 and your AE-RO score were +8, you would fall strongly in the accommodator quadrant. An AC-CE score of +4 and an AE-RO score of +3 would put you slightly in the converser quadrant. The closer your data point is to the point where lines cross, the more balanced is your learning style. If your data point is close to any of the four corners, this indicates that you rely heavily on one particular learning style.

The following summary of the four basic learning style types is based on both research and clinical observation of these patterns of LSI scores.

The **converger's** dominant learning abilities are abstract conceptualisation (AC) and active experimentation (AE). This person's greatest strength lies in the practical application of such ideas. A person with this style seems to do best in those situations, such as conventional intelligence tests, where there is a single correct answer or solution to a question or problem. The converger focuses his/her knowledge through hypothetical-deductive reasoning on specific problems. Research on this style of learning shows that convergers are relatively unemotional, preferring to deal with things rather than people. They tend to have narrow technical interests and choose to specialise in the physical sciences. This learning style is characteristic of many engineers.

The **diverger** has the opposite learning strengths of the converger. This person is best at concrete experience (CE) and reflective observation (RO). This person's greatest strength lies in imaginative ability. This person excels in the ability to view concrete situations from many perspectives. We have labelled this style "diverger" because a person with this style performs better in situations that call for the generation of ideas, such as a "brainstorming" session. Research shows that divergers are interested in people and tend to be imaginative and emotional. They have broad cultural interests and tend to specialize in the arts.

This style is characteristic of individuals from humanities and arts backgrounds. Counsellors, organization development specialists and personnel managers tend to be characterized by this learning style.

The **assimilator's** dominant learning abilities are abstract conceptualisation (AC) and reflective observation (RO). This person's greatest strength lies in the ability to create theoretical models. This person excels in inductive reasoning and in assimilating disparate observations into an integrated explanation.

This person, like the converser, is less interested in people and more concerned with abstract concepts, but is less concerned with the practical use of theories. For this person it is more important that the theory be logically sound and precise; in a situation where a theory or plan does not fit the facts, the assimilator would be likely to disregard or re-examine the facts. As a result, this learning style is more characteristic of pure sciences and mathematics rather than the applied sciences. In organisations, this learning style is found most often in the research and planning departments.

The **accommodator** has the opposite learning strengths of the assimilator. This person is best at concrete experience (CE) and active experimentation (AE), and his/her greatest strength lies in doing things - in carrying out plans and experiments and involving him/herself in new experiences. This person tends to be more of a risk taker than people with the other three learning styles. We have labelled this person "accommodator" because he/she tends to excel in situations which require adaptation to specific immediate circumstances. In situations where a theory or plan does not fit the "facts", this person will most likely discard the plan or theory. This person tends to solve problems in an intuitive trial-and-error manner, relying heavily on other people for information rather than on one's own analytic ability. The accommodator is at ease with people but is sometimes seen as impatient and "pushy". In organisations people with this learning style are found in "action-orientated" jobs, often in marketing or sales.

People who rely heavily on a particular learning style (i.e. whose plot on the Learning Style Grid lies towards the outer corners of the grid) tend to have certain characteristics. Each learning style has strengths and weaknesses. Typical characteristics of the four styles and their strengths and weaknesses are summarised below.

### **Diverger**

#### *Characteristics:*

- Imaginative
- Innovative
- Sociable
- Easy-going
- Observer
- Listener
- Questioner

#### ***Strengths***

- Sees lots of alternatives
- Creative and divergent thinker
- Uses imagination and fantasy
- Shares ideas
- Sees things from many perspectives
- Co-operative and warm to others
- Asks questions and listens to the answers
- Unhurried, friendly

#### ***Weaknesses***

- Waits too long before acting
- Many ideas, little action
- Can not be pushed
- Needs reassurance
- Avoids conflict
- Can't see the wood for the trees
- Low tolerance for detail
- Often frustrating to friends
- Works in bursts

## **Assimilator**

### *Characteristics:*

- Analytical
- Industrious
- Precise
- Logical
- Cool, unemotional

### ***Strengths***

- Gathers all the facts
- Organised and constructive
- Calculates probabilities
- Works well alone
- Uses past experience
- Thinks through ideas
- Plans and checks
- Avoids emotional reactions

### ***Weaknesses***

- Goes into too much detail
- Gets bogged down in theory
- Over-cautious, pedantic
- Reluctant to let go past plans
- More interested in ideas than people
- Needs facts
- Sequential thinker



## **Converger**

### *Characteristics:*

- Practical
- Results-orientated
- Common-sense
- Hands-on
- Independent

### ***Strengths***

- Good at solving problems
- Good detective skills
- Evaluates and tests things
- Sets goals and acts
- Works well independently
- Applies theory to practical situations
- Ready to reward others

### ***Weaknesses***

- Needs to go it alone
- Impatient and critical
- Dismissive of woolly ideas
- Does not use other people well
- People come second to the tasks
- Ready to criticise others
- Resents being given answers

## **Accommodator**

### *Characteristics:*

- Enthusiastic
- "Action man"
- Risk-taker
- Emotional
- Sociable
- Impulsive
- Flexible

### ***Strengths***

- Takes risks
- Gets others involved
- Uses gut reaction
- Likes new challenges
- Active, will try anything
- Enjoys new situations

### ***Weaknesses***

- Impulsive, rushes in
- Leaves loose ends
- Changeable and demanding
- Little systematic organisation
- Gets involved in too many things
- Pushy

Source: iCoach training material

## Appendix 3

### Personal Learning Contract (P.L.C.).

**Personal Learning Contract**

Name:.....  
Date:.....

<b>Purpose</b>	<b>What is my Purpose?</b>	<b>Action (go and do)</b>	<b>What actually was my purpose?</b>	<b>Describe the essential differences?</b>
<b>Outcome</b>	<b>How shall I judge and measure my success?</b>		<b>How well did I do?</b>	<b>Describe the essential differences?</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>What actions shall I take?</b>		<b>What did I actually do?</b>	<b>Describe the essential differences?</b>
<b>What have I learnt from this exercise?</b>				

Source: Adapted from Harri-Augstein and Thomas (1991:151)

## **Appendix 4**

### **An example of how each reflective essay was analysed**

Below is an example of an actual reflective essay that was handed in by one of the co-researchers. Only the formatting has been changed to fit in with the formatting style of the entire document. The documents style and language has not been changed or edited. Only the co-researchers name has been removed.

#### **1. The actual essay**

WHAT I LEARNT IN THE COACHING PROGRAMME, JUN – DEC 2003

BY X, JAN 2004

When I was told about the coaching programme and that I'd been selected to be part of it, I was immediately excited. Having experienced psychotherapy in the past, I was aware of the benefits of 1-to-1 intense periods of reflection and discussion. In terms of my career, I was recently appointed to lead the Marketing & Communications function within T-Systems South Africa. Part of my responsibilities was leading a team of 4 people and I felt that advice and input into the people management side of my job, would be of great benefit to me.

The main link between therapy and coaching only became clear later. Therapy, in my experience, is hugely beneficial in terms of gaining insight into feelings and thought patterns and putting them into perspective. Coaching had a strong learning component to it – reflection helped me to realize things about myself and others (awareness) which, in time, became a powerful catalyst for changing behaviour that is beneficial to leadership.

It is important to look at the initial objectives of my coaching experience. In an initial discussion session between myself, my manager (Desmond), the coach (Lloyd), HR (Sonja) and the company's ad-hoc industrial psychologist (Braam), the objectives of

my learning through coaching centred around developing some of my personal skills as a new leader (as it was agreed that my technical skills did not need attention), verbalized as follows:

- Be comfortable to take risks, experiment, and make mistakes (according to my definition, issues around 'self')
- People: a need to learn the ability to manage the complexities of people (according to my definition, issues around 'people')

Looking back at the 6 months of coaching, it became clear that these 2 issues revolved around a few common, interwoven concepts, including: self confidence and self image, assertiveness, the need to be in control, etc.

I believe that the coaching programme has helped me to make huge progress in terms of the 2 central concepts of 'people' and 'self.' Whilst structuring my feedback for this paper, I have realized that the following interwoven steps took place in terms of my learning:

- Reflection led to perspective
- Perspective led to awareness
- Awareness led to insight
- Insight led to re-evaluation
- Re-evaluation led to confidence
- Confidence led to changed behaviour

In terms of each of these steps, I would like to highlight my main learning at each step:

**Reflection led to perspective.**

In my daily work, up to the point of engaging in the coaching programme, I afforded myself very little time or opportunity to reflect. As a task and goal driven person, my emphasis was on performance and outputs. The coaching sessions forced me to reflect

and this important activity helped my learning enormously. In terms of reflection, my main realizations were:

- As a person, I was extremely task focused and had to consistently perform and succeed, at any cost.
- My team, and our interaction and behaviour, had a lot to do with our history as a team, but the team members' individual and collective behaviour had more to do with my personal attitudes and behaviour than I ever thought.

### **Perspective led to awareness.**

As soon as we (the coach & I) started digging beneath the surface of these reflections, we quickly discovered a number of things. Bringing them into consciousness, and openly discussing them, was a very important step in changing behaviour over the longer term:

- I had immense issues around self confidence and self image. The main elements included an intense need to be liked and belong, strong fear of rejection, severe need to succeed and achieve, which lead to a high task focus and drive. The origin of these feelings and beliefs stemmed from my childhood and I would classify them as inner-child issues. Although identifying and dealing with these issues in psychotherapy in the past, they were still prevalent, albeit in subtler forms and guises.
- In terms of my team, I had difficulty to let my team 'go' and do what they have to, as I tended to take ownership of problems and important, complex tasks.

### **Awareness led to insight**

The awareness that I gained during the coaching sessions of certain feelings, thoughts and behaviours, including the influence of societal 'conditioning,' helped me to gain insight and understand myself, and the behaviour of my team, and people in general, much better. Some of the insights I gained were:

- Other people, and society at large, have influenced who I am and what I believe about myself. My 'self' was based on the labels I was given, or I assumed. These labels, like 'different' or 'gay' or 'not good enough,' shaped who I believe I was. I became them. In becoming them, my fears and insecurities were both the demons & drivers in my life – it is what kept me striving for continued work success, often at the detriment of other aspects of my life. In fact, my need to perform and succeed at work, kept me from being completely fulfilled as a person. To illustrate: starting in the Marketing team, I quickly realized that I could be a better manager than the incumbent, and it became my sole focus to prove myself enough to get the position. I worked extremely hard to prove myself and eventually got the opportunity, and later, the position. But I quickly found that it wasn't enough. I wanted more. I started setting my sights on an international assignment. I now understand that the constant hunger was my own need for recognition, stemming from my insecurities. The penny also dropped in terms of risk-taking - if constant success is so important, risk taking represents possible failure, an option that I was extremely uncomfortable with.
  
- My personal issues had an immense influence on the way I handled my team. For example, my insecurities meant that I drove myself to succeed and perform, no matter what the circumstances. Handing over responsibility and power to my team was therefore difficult, because that would mean control is out of my hands. Coupled with most of the team member's fairly average competency levels (in terms of complex tasks), I continued to make sure I had a huge influence over them and their outputs, which perpetuated the fact that the team members were insecure of their potential. A further example: my need to be liked and belong as well as my fear of rejection meant that I was often too soft & accommodating with my team and their performance. My overcompensation in terms of empathy and understanding stemmed from feelings of hurt, humiliation & unhappiness I had suffered in my childhood.

### **Insight led to re-evaluation**

Once I knew and understood certain things, I could make a shift in terms of thinking and acting. But first, I needed to re-evaluate what I thought about myself and how I thought about success, and achieving it.

- “Am I good enough” and “do people like me” are probably universal questions and issues most people grapple with. My fear of rejection and failure wasn’t due to the fact that I was an unhappy child, or even due to the fact that I am gay and therefore immediately ‘different’ (although these aspects certainly helped to accentuate these feelings). I realised that my fear of rejection and failure are common human issues and what people feel and say towards me, are more often than not, people’s own baggage rather than my own demons. A major re-evaluation was therefore not to take things personally. Furthermore, I needed to re-evaluate my ‘otherness.’ Being sensitive, intuitive and understanding, made (and continues to make) me unique and gave me skills that most other leaders (especially men) need to force or learn. Instead of hiding my sensitivity in the workplace and concentrate on constantly proving myself, I need to embrace and explore my sensitivity in many ways – one of them is to make open myself up and make myself more vulnerable and take risks in order to grow.
- Leadership doesn’t mean power over a team. Leadership means connecting with, and serving people so that they can contribute what they can. This idea of servant leadership is about letting others be. Only if I can be happy and free within myself, I can let others be. A major re-evaluation was that, in the case of my team, I needed to give them the opportunity to develop and learn, and succeed, and fail. Up to now, I had been keeping the team from fulfilling their potential. I needed to transfer responsibility and accountability to the team. That meant that ownership of problems that need to be sorted out, need to be with the people themselves. This need to be part of their growth and development, otherwise I take people’s responsibilities away from them.



### **Re-evaluation led to confidence**

Re-evaluating my beliefs lead to confidence in my new beliefs and actions. Seeing things in perspective and in a new light, really set me free and gave me the confidence to change.

- I have everything right now to be happy. Being 'different' and that includes being gay, is a gift. In the workplace it means that I am more sensitive towards other people, I don't pass judgement as easily (because I am used to being judged). It means I am more intuitive about myself and other people, I am understanding rather than judgemental. All these characteristics assist the leadership role in a modern organization like ours. My past experiences and 'baggage' prepared me for my role and now I can excel in that role.
- I am free, because I am less affected by what people say and think about me. I am responsible for my own happiness and freedom. Other's happiness is their own responsibility. As a leader I can offer empathy, a characteristic I have in abundance. For the rest, people need to deal with their own demons.

### **Confidence led to changed behaviour**

Operating from a perspective of confidence is very different from a perspective of insecurity.

- My ambition, initially fueled by insecurity and the need to constantly prove myself, has shifted. Ambition is now part of a journey towards complete fulfillment and happiness. The 'self' is now defined as what it really is, rather than the label people have assigned to it. I am more confident in my abilities and uniqueness (my 'differentness') and I don't get intimidated as easily. In the coming weeks, months and years, this confidence will help me to experience life to the full. One of the implications is that I will be more vulnerable - expose my true self to people and take risks more easily. Success and performance are not the only drivers anymore.

- Another changed behaviour for me as a leader is reduced focus on task or output, and more focus on people. Although this is not an overnight occurrence, my approach is changing from telling them what to do and how to do it to a coaching approach where I support and help them (the team) to reflect and become aware of things.

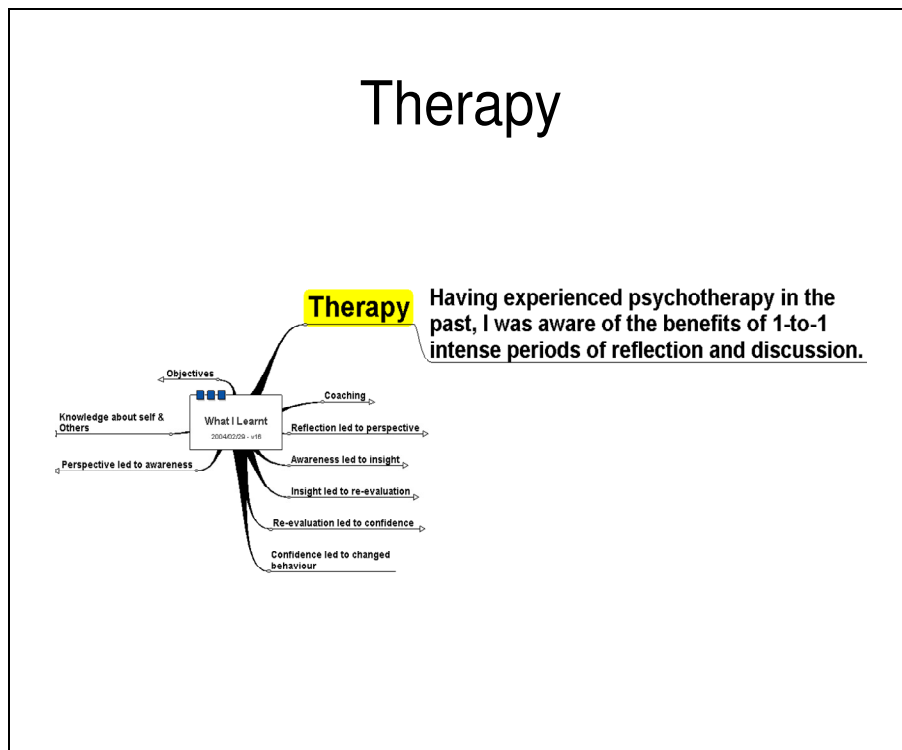
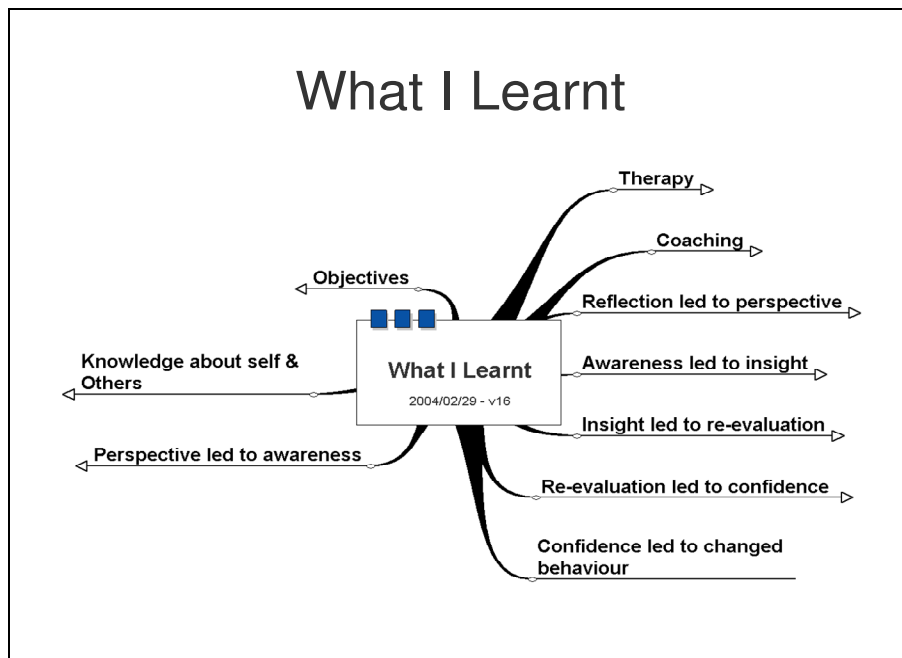
## **Summary**

Looking back, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to undergo coaching. I certainly count it as a highlight in my career thus far, and one of the best things that happened to me in 2003. I am grateful to my company and my manager for affording me the chance to develop myself in this way, and to my coach for his time, insight and patience.

## **2. How the author went about doing the analysis**

The essay was read through a number of times to gain familiarity with the content. It was read, put aside and then reread again. The content of the essay was then analysed and broken into what appeared to be the most obvious themes. This was done by building a mind map of the whole essay. The mind map was built in a computer package called MindManager®. Data from the original essay was moved into MindManager® by means of cutting and pasting. In so doing the author was able to build a conceptual map of the various themes that arose for the essay. Unfortunately the MindManager® version was too large to print, so for the sake of illustration the author was forced to export the mind map to a PowerPoint presentation. (MindManager® has a built in export function). The slides that follow give a good idea of how this mind map was built up in MindManager®. The same procedure was followed for all thirteen essays.

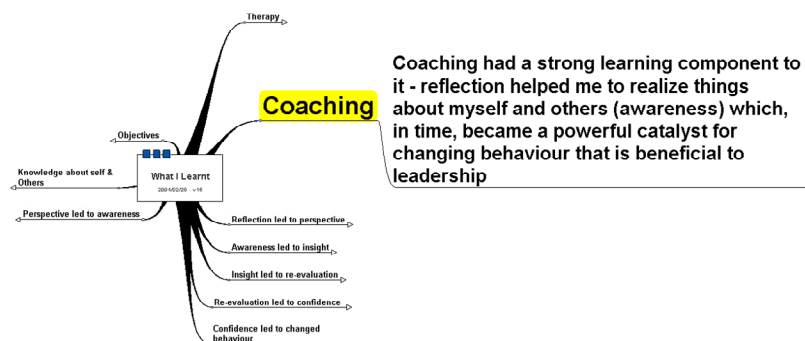
### 3. Analysis done in MindManager®



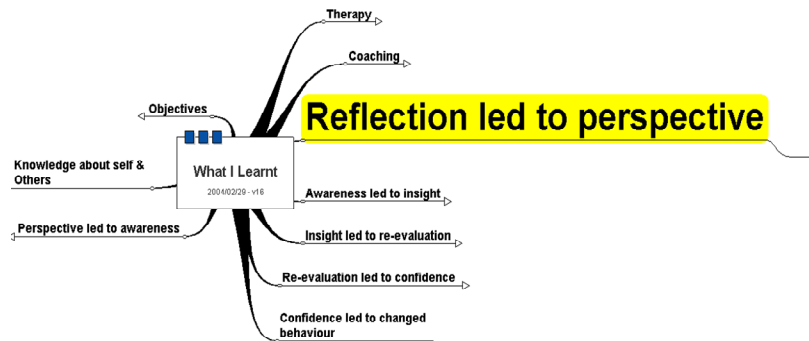
Having experienced psychotherapy in the past, I was aware of the benefits of 1-to-1 intense periods of reflection and discussion.

- Therapy, in my experience, is hugely beneficial in terms of gaining insight into feelings and thought patterns and putting them into perspective.
  - The origin of these feelings and beliefs stemmed from my childhood and I would classify them as inner-child issues. Although identifying and dealing with these issues in psychotherapy in the past, they were still prevalent, albeit in subtler forms and guises.

## Coaching

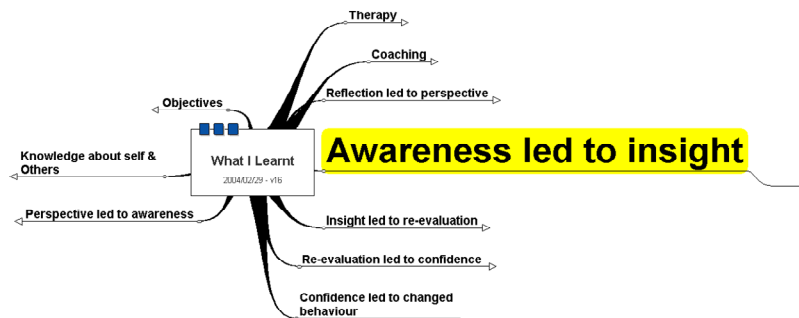


# Reflection led to perspective



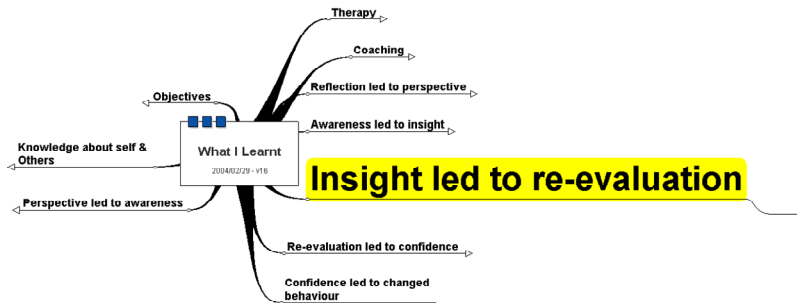
- , I afforded myself very little time or opportunity to reflect. As a task and goal driven person, my emphasis was on performance and outputs. The coaching sessions forced me to reflect and this important activity helped my learning enormously

# Awareness led to insight



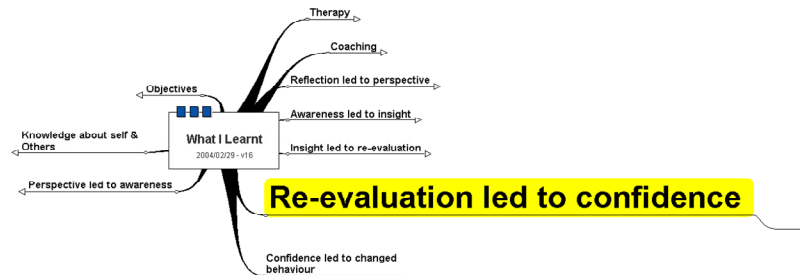
- The awareness that I gained during the coaching sessions of certain feelings, thoughts and behaviours, including the influence of societal 'conditioning,' helped me to gain insight and understand myself, and the behaviour of my team, and people in general, much better

# Insight led to re-evaluation



- Once I knew and understood certain things, I could make a shift in terms of thinking and acting. But first, I needed to re-evaluate what I thought about myself and how I thought about success, and achieving it.

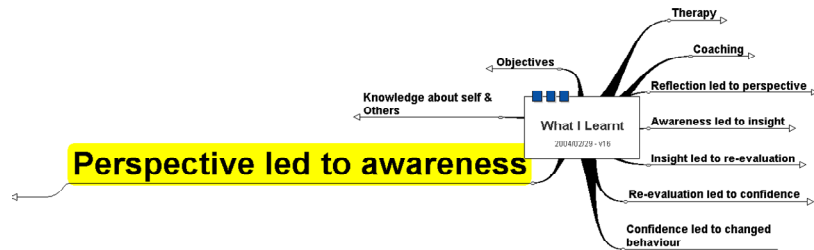
# Re-evaluation led to confidence



- Re-evaluating my beliefs lead to confidence in my new beliefs and actions. Seeing things in perspective and in a new light, really set me free and gave me the confidence to change

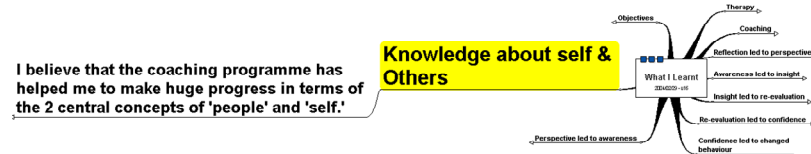


# Perspective led to awareness



- As soon as we (the coach & I) started digging beneath the surface of these reflections, we quickly discovered a number of things. Bringing them into consciousness, and openly discussing them, was a very important step in changing behaviour over the longer term

# Knowledge about self & Others



## People

- - People: a need to learn the ability to manage the complexities of people (according to my definition, issues around 'people')

- People: a need to learn the ability to manage the complexities of people (according to my definition, issues around 'people')

- Assertiveness, the need to be in control

### Assertiveness, the need to be in control

- - My team, and our interaction and behaviour, had a lot to do with our history as a team, but the team members' individual and collective behaviour had more to do with my personal attitudes and behaviour than I ever thought.

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- - In terms of my team, I had difficulty to let my team 'go' and do what they have to, as I tended to take ownership of problems and important, complex tasks

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- - Leadership doesn't mean power over a team. Leadership means connecting with, and serving people so that they can contribute what they can. This idea of servant leadership is about letting others be. Only if I can be happy and free within myself, I can let others be. A major re-evaluation was that, in the case of my team, I needed to give them the opportunity to develop and learn, and succeed, and fail. Up to now, I had been keeping the team from fulfilling their potential. I needed to transfer responsibility and accountability to the team. That meant that ownership of problems that need to be sorted out, need to be with the people themselves. This need to be part of their growth and development, otherwise I take people's responsibilities away from them.

### Self

- - Be comfortable to take risks, experiment, and make mistakes (according to my definition, issues around 'self')

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- Self confidence and self image

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- - As a person, I was extremely task focused and had to consistently perform and succeed, at any cost.

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- - I had immense issues around self confidence and self image. The main elements included an intense need to be liked and belong, strong fear of rejection, severe need to succeed and achieve, which lead to a high task focus and drive. The origin of these feelings and beliefs stemmed from my childhood and I would classify them as inner-child issues. Although identifying and dealing with these issues in psychotherapy in the past, they were still prevalent, albeit in subtler forms and guises.

Other people, and society at large, have influenced who I am and what I believe about myself. My 'self' was based on the labels I was given, or I assumed. These labels, like 'different' or 'gay' or 'not good enough,' shaped who I believe I was. I became them. In becoming them, my fears and insecurities where both the deamons & drivers in my life - it is what kept me striving for continued work success, often at the detriment of other aspects of my life. In fact, my need to perform and succeed at work, kept me from being completely fulfilled as a person. To illustrate: starting in the Marketing team, I quickly realized that I could be a better manager than the incumbent, and it became my sole focus to prove myself enough to get the position. I worked extremely hard to prove myself and eventually got the opportunity, and later, the position. But I quickly found that it wasn't enough. I wanted more. I started setting my sights on an international assignment. I now understand that the constant hunger was my own need for recognition, stemming from my insecurities. The penny also dropped in terms of risk-taking - if constant success is so important, risk taking represent possible failure, an option that I was extremely uncomfortable with.

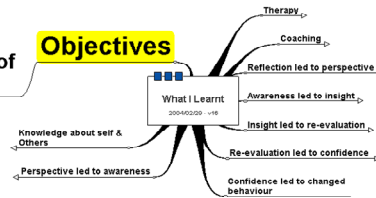
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# Objectives

The objectives of my learning through coaching centred around developing some of my personal skills as a new leader



## 4. Themes from the MindManager® analys was automatically generated in Word

Having done the analysis, the themes and the supporting data were then automatically generated in a word document through MindManager's® export function. (Only the formatting was changed to comply with the format of the entire document). The generated themes and the supporting data are listed below.

## **5. The generated themes and supporting data**

### **Therapy**

Having experienced psychotherapy in the past, I was aware of the benefits of 1-to-1 intense periods of reflection and discussion.

Therapy, in my experience, is hugely beneficial in terms of gaining insight into feelings and thought patterns and putting them into perspective.

The origin of these feelings and beliefs stemmed from my childhood and I would classify them as inner-child issues. Although identifying and dealing with these issues in psychotherapy in the past, they were still prevalent, albeit in subtler forms and guises.

### **Coaching**

Coaching had a strong learning component to it - reflection helped me to realize things about myself and others (awareness) which, in time, became a powerful catalyst for changing behaviour that is beneficial to leadership

### **Reflection led to perspective**

I afforded myself very little time or opportunity to reflect. As a task and goal driven person, my emphasis was on performance and outputs. The coaching sessions forced me to reflect and this important activity helped my learning enormously

### **Awareness led to insight**

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As soon as we (the coach & I) started digging beneath the surface of these reflections, we quickly discovered a number of things. Bringing them into consciousness, and openly discussing them, was a very important step in changing behaviour over the longer term

### **Knowledge about self & Others**

I believe that the coaching programme has helped me to make huge progress in terms of the 2 central concepts of 'people' and 'self.'

### **People**

- People: a need to learn the ability to manage the complexities of people (according to my definition, issues around 'people')

Assertiveness, the need to be in control

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## **Objectives**

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